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THE

COMPLETE WORKS

OF

ROBERT BURNS

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THE

COMPLETE WORKS

OF

ROBERT BURNS

(SELF-INTERPRETING)

ILLUSTRATED WITH SIXTY ETCHINGS

AND WOOD CUTS, MAPS AND FACSIMILES

VOLUME I.

PHILADELPHIA

GEBBIE & CO., PUBLISHERS

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PUBLISHERS' PREFACE.

In May, 1787, the celebrated Dr. Moore, the author of "Zeluco," in writing to Burns, says, "You ought to deal more sparingly for the future, in the provincial dialect. Why should you by using that, limit the number of your admirers to those who understand the Scottish, when you could extend it to all persons of taste, who understand the English language."

A few years later, the poet Cowper, writing from England to a friend in Scotland said, "Burns loses much of his deserved praise in this country, through our ignorance of his language. I despair of meeting any Englishman who will take the pains that I have taken to understand him. His candle is light, but shut up in a dark lantern. I lent him to a sensible neighbor of mine, but the uncouth dialect spoiled all, and before he had read him through he was quite 'ramfeezled.'"

Lord Jeffrey, Edinburgh, writes to Mr. Empson, London, Nov. 11th, 1837: "In the last week I have read all Burns's life and works, not without many tears for the life especially. * * * You Southern Saxons cannot value him rightly. You miss half the pathos, and more than half his sweetness."

It has been a matter of regret to all English readers that Burns's "Scottish dialect" is so hard to understand. *To remedy this is the chief purpose of* THE SELF-INTERPRETING EDITION OF THE COMPLETE WORKS OF ROBERT BURNS.

The special qualifications for this work of interpretation are referred to in our Editors' preface. Mr. Hunter, we may say *en passant*, was selected by us as consulting Scotch editor, from our knowledge of his general scholarly ability, his long experience as the chief editor of the revised Ogilvie's Imperial Dictionary, as editor of the supplement to Worcester's Dictionary, and more especially because of his enthusiastic love for Burns, his thorough knowledge of his author, and last though not least, because the place of his nativity—Ayrshire, (like that of Mr. Gebbie, co-editor and publisher)—made him *au fait* in the language, manners and customs of the "land of Burns."

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The advantage of a dual editorship, in which both the members are "native and to the manner born," has been manifested at every step in the progress of the work, alike in compilation, interpretation, and elucidation generally. It is for the public to judge the result.

We desire to say only one word as to the embellishment and general make-up of our Self-Interpreting edition of The Scottish Bard. The type was specially cast for this edition by The MacKellar Smiths & Jordan Co., of Philadelphia. The Illustrations (over one hundred in all) have for nearly two years engaged the best etchers and engravers in America and some in Europe. The Maps, Facsimiles of MSS., &c., which are reproduced, will be interesting, being mostly copied from original MS. now in American collections. In this connection we wish to record our thanks to Messrs. Geo. W. Childs, Ferdinand J. Dreer, and Raymond Claghorn, of Philadelphia, and Robert Clarke, of Cincinnati, for placing at our disposal their original MSS. of Burns.

When we have deemed it desirable, we have reproduced the music for the best songs, and in the George Thompson Correspondence we give the original music in full.

In conclusion, we have made it our study to combine in this edition of Burns every feature of excellence that has hitherto been developed in connection with his name and fame, and have aimed to make it in all respects such an edition as the truest lover of Burns can take to his home and say, "Now I have an edition of Burns worthy the Poet."

GEBBIE AND COMPANY.

EDITORS' PREFACE.

In offering to the public another edition of the Works of Burns, it appears reasonable that we should state the reasons that led us to undertake the task of preparing it, and the special claims that we believe it to have on public attention. First, then, we say that up to this time the mere English-speaking reader has had no edition of Burns at his disposal enabling him adequately to understand and appreciate this, the greatest of Scottish poets. Burns's poems are, as he himself phrases it, in the title-page to his Kilmarnock Edition, "chiefly in the Scottish dialect"—a dialect largely "an unknown tongue" to most Americans and Englishmen—and this applies especially to his best and most characteristic pieces. Many editions of the Works of Burns have been published, some with and some without glossaries, and some with foot-notes at the bottom of the page, giving (or professing to give) the English equivalents of a small proportion of the Scottish words, but not one of those editions satisfies in any adequate degree, the requirements of the English reader. For the first time the English-speaking public is put in a position to understand Burns readily, to enjoy his caustic wit, his genial humor, his wondrous power of fancy, and to appreciate his unrivalled richness of diction and felicity of expression. Up to this time the American public have had to receive Burns largely on trust, or to form their estimate of him from the pieces they could understand. He is now made plain in all his fulness and power.

Besides the feature of interpretation, on which we largely rely for the favor of the American public in this enterprise, we desire to point out, somewhat in detail, the immense superiority in respect of completeness that the present edition possesses over all other editions of our author. The fact is unique that it has taken nearly a hundred years to gather from their hiding-places more than one-half the letters of Burns, and more than one-third of his poems and songs. There are various causes to account for this singular fact.

Chief amongst them was his early death. Burns died in his thirty-seventh year. He had not only been a prolific poet, but a very active correspondent; but he was very unsystematic. It has been urged by his early biographers, Currie, Cromek, Lockhart and Cunningham, especially, that Burns never expected that his correspondence would be published. This may be correct up to a certain period, but we are enabled to publish (for the first time) a letter which he wrote to Mr. Peter Hill, book-seller and publisher, Edinburgh (introducing Mr. Findlater),* in which he states that he was collecting (and evidently preparing for publication) some, at least, of his letters. This was in 1794. Shortly after this (in 1796) Burns died, and then it was determined to publish his works, letters and poetry, for the benefit of his family. The editorship was nobly and unselfishly undertaken by Dr. Currie, and the work carefully and successfully accomplished. This was in 1800; but Currie was trammeled by three or four draw-backs: *First*, some of the pieces to which he had access were considered too free in various ways. *Second*, Burns was full half a century ahead of his time in his ideas on Liberty; and radicalism, after the commencement of the French revolution, had become unpopular in Europe, therefore, all letters, songs and poems likely to be offensive to a conservative government were suppressed. This feature will be best understood by reading "The Lincluden Vision and Song of Liberty," now, for the first time, published as a connected poem. *Third*, the satires and epigrams affecting people then living were also suppressed. *Fourth*, the especial reason why Dr. Currie did not have more matter to select from or record, was:—the fame of Burns at the commencement of this century was not so assured as it afterwards became. To quote the words of one of his most intelligent eulogists:—"It took Scotland fully fifty years to arrive at a full appreciation of what a gigantic genius she had held in her bosom." Gradually, however, as his fame increased, people with whom he had corresponded began to look up his letters; some retained them as precious relics, and some sold them. Then the publishers got them for publication, until when Allan Cunningham, in 1834, published his edition of the poet, he was able to boast that in his "Complete Works of Burns" he had given to the world 150 songs and poems more than Currie had given, and more than 100 more letters.

The edition of Cunningham (Virtue & Co.) and Blackie's

* This letter is now in the collection of Mr. Ferdinand J. Dreer, of Philadelphia, who kindly lent it to us for publication.

have been the editions most extensively sold in America, and Americans generally have accepted them as complete. Blackie's was published in 1846, and was a trifle more complete than Cunningham's. Since the publication of Virtue's and Blackie's editions, there have appeared Chambers', Waddell's, Smith's, Gilfillan's and Wm. Scott Douglas's. The public will understand the necessity for a new edition of Burns's works when we inform them that ours will contain at least 100 pieces in verse and nearly 200 more letters than either Virtue's or Blackie's. Besides this, we have restored to their full text many of the poems and letters abridged by previous editors. The notes of all previous editors we have treated on the freest eclectic principle ; using only those, however, that are needful for a clearer understanding of the text and the story of the Poet's life.

While we have, therefore, laid all the previous editions of Burns under contribution, comparing, weighing and adopting for ours what we thought best in each, we have selected for the basis of this edition, that of Wm. Scott Douglas, of Edinburgh. Mr. Douglas has undoubtedly, on the principle of using the work of *his* predecessors, produced the most complete and satisfactory edition of the works of the Bard of Scotland, published till 1880. We have not hesitated, however, to deal freely with his work, collating it constantly with that of other editors, Cunningham, Hogg and Motherwell, Chambers, Gilfillan, Waddell and others, adopting it where we considered it best, but correcting, amplifying, condensing, deleting or otherwise modifying it as the weight of authority or our own judgment and knowledge dictated. The result is, that this is really an ECLECTIC EDITION, comprising the best of all former editions of the works of Burns, to which we add our own commentaries and translations. Our notes and explanations are generally signed with the editor's initials, and the same mode is followed in reference to any original matter added to Mr. Douglas's notes. Where additional matter has been adopted from other editors, credit is given them ; in the case of mere incidental hints or suggestions we have not been so careful to indicate authorship. Where Mr. Douglas's notes have been modified by re-writing a portion for the sake of clearness, condensation, or correction, or by incorporating new matter in the text with the view of enriching and elucidating it, we have not, so long as the main portion of the work is Mr. D.'s, indicated our share.

We publish, for the first time, enough of the celebrated and mysterious "Court of Equity" to enable our readers clearly to

understand the nature of this production, so frequently referred to in his correspondence.

Our discovery of the connection of "The Lincluden Vision" and "The Ode to Liberty" will be found fully detailed in Vol. V. The long missing Edinburgh Journal will be found complete in Vol. II.

One new special feature in this edition, (besides our method of translation) is, that each volume is complete in itself, covering a certain period of the poet's life, and comprising both his rhymed and unrhymed productions, the poetry keeping time with the prose and the prose with the poetry; while the intercalated biography aids in illustrating both and in turn receives illustration from them. The only exceptions to this arrangement are in the cases of his Autobiography, his Clarinda Correspondence and his Correspondence with George Thomson; and, in each of these cases the intelligent reader will easily appreciate the reason for the distinction. By treating the work in this way the life-history of the Poet helps to elucidate his productions.

In our choice of a Biography for the poet, we have had no hesitation in selecting that of Alexander Smith, the author of "City Poems," "A Life Drama," etc., a poet and an Ayrshire man by birth, as being at once the clearest, fullest, most genially sympathetic, and generally interesting. The same freedom of treatment has been applied to it that has been applied to Mr. Douglas's notes; facts have been verified, opinions and judgments weighed, and every means used to give the public at once, the fullest and fairest biography of Robert Burns. Free use has been made in this connection of the eloquent sketch of his life by Dr. Waddell, and the careful Biography by Robert Chambers. Nor have the Biographies by his brother poets, Cunningham, and Hogg and Motherwell been neglected.

GEO. GEBBIE.

PREFACE.

(*To the Original Edition, Kilmarnock*, 1786.)

THE following trifles are not the production of the Poet, who, with all the advantages of learned art, and perhaps amid the elegancies and idlenesses of upper life, looks down for a rural theme, with an eye to Theocrites or Virgil. To the Author of this, these and other celebrated names (their countrymen) are, in their original languages, 'a fountain shut up, and a book sealed.' Unacquainted with the necessary requisites for commencing Poet by rule, he sings the sentiments and manners he felt and saw in himself and his rustic compeers around him, in his and their native language. Though a Rhymer from his earliest years, at least from the earliest impulses of the softer passions, it was not till very lately that the applause, perhaps the partiality, of Friendship, wakened his vanity so far as to make him think anything of his was worth showing; and none of the following works were ever composed with a view to the press. To amuse himself with the little creations of his own fancy, amid the toil and fatigues of a laborious life; to transcribe the various feelings, the loves, the griefs, the hopes, the fears, in his own breast; to find some kind of counterpoise to the struggles of a world, always an alien scene, a task uncouth to the poetical mind; these were his motives for courting the Muses, and in these he found Poetry to be its own reward.

Now that he appears in the public character of an Author, he does it with fear and trembling. So dear is fame to the rhyming tribe, that even he, an obscure, nameless Bard, shrinks aghast at the thought of being branded as 'An impertinent blockhead, obtruding his nonsense on the world; and because he can make a shift to jingle a few doggerel Scotch rhymes together, looks upon himself as a Poet of no small consequence forsooth.'

It is an observation of that celebrated Poet*—whose divine Elegies do honor to our language, our nation and our species,

---

* Shenstone.

—that 'Humility has depressed many a genius to a hermit, but never raised one to fame.' If any Critic catches at the word *genius*, the Author tells him, once for all, that he certainly looks upon himself as possest of some poetic abilities, otherwise his publishing in the manner he has done would be a manœuvre below the worst character which, he hopes his worst enemy will ever give him: but to the genius of a Ramsay, or the glorious dawnings of the poor unfortunate Ferguson, he, with equal unaffected sincerity, declares, that, even in his highest pulse of vanity, he has not the most distant pretensions. These two justly admired Scotch Poets he has often had in his eye in the following pieces; but rather with a view to kindle at their flame, than for servile imitation.

To his Subscribers, the Author returns his most sincere thanks. Not the mercenary bow over a counter, but the heart-throbbing gratitude of the Bard, conscious how much he is indebted to Benevolence and Friendship for gratifying him, if he deserves it, in that dearest wish of every poetic bosom—to be distinguished. He begs his readers, particularly the Learned and the Polite, who may honor him with a perusal, that they will make every allowance for Education and Circumstances of Life: but if, after a fair, candid, and impartial criticism, he shall stand convicted of Dulness and Nonsense, let him be done by, as he would in that case do by others—let him be condemned, without mercy, to contempt and oblivion.

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EXPLANATION.

At the head of each Poem, Song, or Letter, will be recorded, where and when it was first *published.*

The Scotch words are printed in *Italics*, and their English meaning, in small type, appears at the end of each line.

The Chronological Notes of the Douglas Edition, as explained in the Editor's Preface, being here mainly used, are not signed; all the other notes are recorded by signature, or credited to their various editors.

The date of the compositions, and the age of the Poet at the period, appear at the head of each alternate page.

POEMS AND SONGS.

SONG—HANDSOME NELL.

Tune—"I am a man unmarried."

(CURRIE, 1800.)

I never had the least thought or inclination of turning Poet till I got once heartily in love, and then *rhyme* and *song* were, in a manner, the spontaneous language of my heart. The following composition was the first of my performances. It is, indeed, very puerile and silly; but I am always pleased with it, as it recalls to my mind those happy days when my heart was yet honest, and my tongue was sincere.—*Common-place Book, August, 1783.*

O ONCE I lov'd a bonie lass,
  Aye, and I love her still;
And whilst that virtue warms my breast,
  I'll love my handsome Nell.

As bonie lasses I hae seen,
  And mony full as *braw;* gaily dressed
But, for a modest gracefu' mien,
  The like I never saw.

A bonie lass, I will confess,
  Is pleasant to the *e'e;* eye
But, without some better qualities,
  She's no a lass for me.

But Nelly's looks are *blythe* and sweet, cheerful
  And what is best of *a'*, all
Her reputation is complete,
  And fair without a flaw.

She dresses ay sae clean and neat,
  Both decent and genteel;
And then there's something in her gait
  Gars ony dress look *weel.* makes well

A gaudy dress and *gentle* air well-born
  May slightly touch the heart;
But it's innocence and modesty
  That polishes the dart.

'Tis this in Nelly pleases me,
  'Tis this enchants my soul;
For absolutely in my breast
  She reigns without controul.

[Dr. Currie transcribed this song very accurately from the poet's Common-place Book, where it stands recorded under date April, 1783. Burns delighted to refer to the incident that gave rise to these juvenile verses:—Nelly Kirkpatrick, daughter of a blacksmith in the neighborhood of Mount Oliphant, inspired the song in the harvest-field, in the autumn of 1773, when he was yet under fifteen, or as some say seventeen, years old. We must refer the reader to the bard's own account of this his first love-experience, contained in the poem addressed to Mrs. Scott of Wauchope House, and also in his autobiography; meanwhile let us note how early the power of music seems to have affected Burns. Speaking of "Nell," he says: "Among other love-inspiring qualities, she sang sweetly; and it was her favourite reel to which I attempted giving an embodied vehicle in rhyme." In his Common-place Book, he has followed the record of it with an elaborate "criticism," which shews how carefully he had been training himself for lyric composition. Here is a sample:—In the second couplet of verse *first* "the expression is a little awkward, and the sentiment too serious." "Stanza the *second* I am well pleased with . . . and I think it conveys a fine idea of a sweet, sonsy lass."* He

* "Sonsy lass," a plump, well-conditioned lass. "Sonsiness" implies good-nature. — J. H.

condemns verses *third* and *fourth;* but "the thoughts in the *fifth* stanza come finely up to my favorite idea—a sweet, sonsy lass." He approves also of the *sixth* verse, "but the second and fourth lines *ending with short syllables, hurts the whole.*" "The *seventh* stanza has several minute faults; but I remember I composed it in a wild enthusiasm of passion, and to this hour I never recollect it, but my heart melts, and my blood sallies at the remembrance." In 1786, Burns presented copies of some of his early pieces—and this among the rest—to Mrs. Stewart of Stair, and in that MS. the fourth verse is remodelled thus:—

> But Nelly's looks are blythe and sweet,
> Good-humoured, frank, and free;
> And still the more I view them o'er,
> The more they captive me.

Verse fifth is wanting in the Stair MS. That the poet was not satisfied with these variations is evident from the fact that he afterwards transmitted the song to Johnson for publication in its original form.]

HAR'STE—A FRAGMENT. harvest

Tune—"I had a horse, and I had nae mair."

(ORIGINAL COMMON-PLACE BOOK, 1872.)

Another circumstance of my life, which made very considerable alteration on my mind and manners, was, that I spent my seventeenth * summer a good distance from home, at a noted school on a smuggling coast, to learn mensuration, surveying, dialling, &c. . . . I went on with a high hand in my geometry, till the sun entered *Virgo*, a month which is always a carnival in my bosom; a charming *fillette*, who lived next door to the school, overset my trigonometry, &c. . . . The last two nights of my stay in the country, had sleep been a mortal sin, I was innocent. . . .

Song *second* was the ebullition of that passion which ended the fore-mentioned school business.—*Autobiography.*

Now breezy *win's* and slaughtering guns winds
Bring Autumn's pleasant weather,

Dr. Currie and succeeding editors of Burns have printed this word "nineteenth;" the above extract is made from the original MS. (Dr. Currie made the correction, after due deliberation, on the authority of Gilbert Burns, who affirmed that here and elsewhere the poet had understated his age by two years.—J. H.)

And the muircock springs on whirring wings
  Amang the blooming heather.

Now waving crops, with yellow tops,
  Delight the weary farmer,
An' the moon shines bright when I rove at night,
  To muse . . . . . *

[The school was that of Kirkoswald, and the name of this "charming *fillette*" was Peggy Thomson. Shortly prior to the first publication of our author's poems she became the wife of a Mr. Neilson at Kirkoswald—an "old acquaintance" of Burns, "and a most worthy fellow." When we come to give the song in its finished form (under date 1783), about which time, it seems, Burns experienced a renewed fit of passion for Peggy, we shall give some particulars regarding her history. See page 50.

Here we see that from the very beginning of the poet's attempts at song-writing, he must have a tune to prompt his musings. He early laid down this rule, that "to *sowth* the tune over and over, is the readiest way to catch the inspiration and raise the bard into that glorious enthusiasm so strongly characteristic of old Scotch poetry."] whistle softly

SONG—O *TIBBIE*, I HAE SEEN THE DAY.

Isabella

Tune—"Invercauld's Reel, or Strathspey."

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1788. COMPARED WITH C.-P. BOOK, 1872.)

Chor.—O Tibbie, I hae seen the day,
  Ye *wadna* been sae shy; would not
  For *laik* o' *gear* ye *lightly* me, lack cash slight
  But, trowth, I *care na by*. don't care

Yestreen I met you on the moor, yester-eve
Ye spak na, but gaed by like stoure;†

---

* In the extended version, printed p. 50 this line reads "To muse upon my charmer," but in the Common-place Book, after "To muse," a name, supposed to be Jean Armour, is written in cypher, or short-hand. If this supposition is correct, it only shews what "charmer" was uppermost in the poet's mind when he made the entry in August, 1785.

† You spoke not, but went past like dust driven by the wind.

Ye *geck* at me because I'm poor, toss your head
But *fient* a hair care I. deuce
O Tibbie, I hae seen the day, &c.

When comin hame on Sunday last,
Upon the road as I cam past,
Ye snufft an *gae* your head a cast— gave
But *trowth* I care't na by. in truth
O Tibbie, I hae seen the day, &c.

I doubt na, lass, but ye may think,
Because ye hae the name o' *clink*, cash
That ye can please me at a wink,
Whene'er ye like to try.
O Tibbie, I hae seen the day, &c.

But sorrow tak him that's sae mean,
Altho' his *pouch* o' coin were clean, pocket
Wha follows ony saucy *quean*, wench
That looks sae proud and high.
O Tibbie, I hae seen the day, &c.

Altho' a lad were e'er sae smart,
If that he want the *yellow dirt*, gold
Ye'll cast your head anither *airt*, direction
And answer him fu' dry.
O Tibbie, I hae seen the day, &c.

But if he hae the name o' *gear*, money
Ye'll fasten to him like a brier,
Tho' hardly he, for sense or *lear*, learning
Be better than the *kye*. kine
O Tibbie, I hae seen the day, &c.

But, Tibbie, lass, tak my advice:
Your daddie's gear maks you sae nice;

The deil a ane *wad spier* your price, would ask
Were ye as poor as I.
O Tibbie, I hae seen the day, &c.

There lives a lass beside yon park,
I'd rather *hae* her in her *sark*, have chemise
Than you wi' a' your thousand mark;*
That *gars* you look sae high. makes
O Tibbie, I hae seen the day, &c.

[A little controversy has arisen regarding the date of this song. In the poet's Glenriddell notes, he expressly says of it:—"This song I composed about the age of seventeen." Mrs. Begg, on the other hand (who, by the way, was only five years old when her brother was seventeen), insisted that the Tibbie of the song was Isabella Stein, of Tarbolton Parish. In a note to the present writer, she says:—"Tibbie Stein lived at Little Hill, a farm marching with that of Lochlea: that the song was written upon her was well known in the neighborhood, no one doubting it."

With all deference, we are inclined to adhere to the poet's direct statement, and regard this as a Mount Oliphant incident, following immediately after the summer he spent at Kirkoswald. We feel greatly strengthened in this opinion by a corresponding record of Burns, the correctness of which has also been much controverted by his brothers and sisters. It is this:—"In my seventeenth year (*i. e.*, 1775, two years before the Lochlea period), to give my manners a brush, I went to a country dancing-school. My father had an unaccountable antipathy against these meetings; and my going was, what to this hour I repent, in absolute defiance of his commands." †

The second stanza and the closing one are both wanting in Johnson's *Museum*. They are inserted here from the Commonplace Book. Dr. Currie's version of the concluding stanza reads thus:—

There lives a lass in yonder park,
I wadna gie her in her sark
For thee, wi' a' thy thousan' mark;
Ye needna look sae high.]

---

* The mark was a Scottish coin worth 13*s.* 4*d.* Scots, or 1*s.* 1⅓*d.* sterling, or 26⅔ cents.

† There is some question regarding the chronology here, and most commentators place the school at Tarbolton.—J. H.

SONG—I DREAM'D I LAY.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1788.)

These two stanzas I composed when I was seventeen, and are among the oldest of my printed pieces.—*Glenriddell Notes in Cromek.*

I DREAM'D I lay where flowers were springing
  Gaily in the sunny beam;
List'ning to the wild birds singing,
  By a falling crystal stream:
Straight the sky grew black and daring;
  Thro' the woods the whirlwinds rave;
Trees with aged arms were warring,
  O'er the swelling *drumlie* wave. muddy

Such was my life's deceitful morning,
  Such the pleasures I enjoy'd:
But lang *or* noon, loud tempests storming, ere
  A' my flowery bliss destroy'd. all
Tho' fickle fortune has deceiv'd me—
  She promis'd fair, and perform'd but ill,
Of *mony* a joy and hope bereav'd me— many
  I bear a heart shall support me still.

[There can be no doubt that this production was suggested to the young lyrist by his admiration of Mrs. Cockburn's song, "I've seen the smiling of Fortune beguiling," which, about the year 1764, found its way into miscellaneous collections of song. It appeared in one of these published in that year, called *The Blackbird;* and also in a like miscellany entitled *The Charmer*, and in another named *The Lark* (both of the latter dated 1765). Any one of them may have been that "Select Collection" which, he tells us, was his *vade mecum* before the Burness family removed from Mount Oliphant.

The poet again and again reverts to the last four lines of this song, as if the conning them over yielded him some comfort. "At the close of that dreadful period"—his distress at Irvine—he

adopted these lines as the opening of a little "sang to soothe his misery," only altering line third to suit his altered circumstances, thus:

Of mistress, friends and wealth bereaved me.

But the embryo minstrel, in composing the present song, had Mrs. Cockburn's *Flowers of the Forest* rather too much in his eye; for he not only copied her ideas, but her very expressions. For *her* "silver streams shining in the sunny beams," we have here the tyro's "crystal stream" falling "gaily in the sunny beam." The river Tweed of Mrs. Cockburn "grows *drumly* and dark," and so does the streamlet of the young dreamer become a "swelling *drumlie* wave." The lady hears "loud tempests storming before the mid-day," and so does the boy Burns hear "lang or noon, loud tempests storming." Finally, the authoress is "perplexed" with the "sporting of fickle fortune," and our poet is wretchedly "deceived" by the ill-performed promises of the same "fickle fortune;" and, not to be outdone by the lady's defiance of fortune's frowns, the independent youngster boasts that he "bears a heart shall support him still." Robert Chambers refers to these similitudes in his last remarks on this song.]

SONG—IN THE CHARACTER OF A RUINED FARMER.

Tune—"Go from my window, Love, do."

(Chambers, 1852, Compared with the Orig. MS.)

The sun he is sunk in the west,
All creatures retirèd to rest,
While here I sit, all sore beset,
With sorrow, grief, and woe:
And it's O, fickle Fortune, O!

The prosperous man is asleep,
Nor hears how the whirlwinds sweep;
But Misery and I must watch
The surly tempest blow;
And it's O, fickle Fortune, O!

There lies the dear partner of my breast;
Her cares for a moment at rest:
Must I see thee, my youthful pride,
Thus brought so very low!
And it's O, fickle Fortune, O!

There lie my sweet babies in her arms;
No anxious fear their little hearts alarms;
But for their sake my heart does ache,
With many a bitter throe:
And it's O, fickle Fortune, O!

I once was by Fortune carest:
I once could relieve the distrest:
Now life's poor support, hardly earn'd,
My fate will scarce bestow:
And it's O, fickle Fortune, O!

No comfort, no comfort I have!
How welcome to me were the grave!
But then my wife and children dear—
O, whither would they go!
And it's O, fickle Fortune, O!

O whither, O whither shall I turn!
All friendless, forsaken, forlorn!
For, in this world, Rest or Peace
I never more shall know!
And it's O, fickle Fortune, O!

[The original of this early production is in the possession of William Nelson, Esq., Edinburgh. It is a stray leaf from a collection formerly known as the Stair MS., now dissevered and scattered abroad. The "ruined farmer" here is undoubtedly meant as a presentment of the author's father bravely struggling to weather out his hard fate at Mount Oliphant. As a pathetic

dirge, it is the best illustration of the following passage in the poet's autobiography :—

"The farm proved a ruinous bargain. . . . My father was advanced in life when he married. I was the eldest of seven children, and he, worn out by early hardship, was unfit for labour. My father's spirit was soon irritated, but not easily broken. There was a freedom in his lease in two years more; and to weather these two years we retrenched expenses," &c.]

TRAGIC FRAGMENT.

(From the Poet's MS. in the Monument at Edinburgh, with Heading from Cromek, 1808.)

In my early years, nothing less would serve me than courting the Tragic Muse. I was, I think, about eighteen or nineteen when I sketched the outlines of a tragedy forsooth; but the bursting of a cloud of family misfortunes, which had for some time threatened us, prevented my farther progress. In those days I never wrote down anything; so, except a speech or two, the whole has escaped my memory. The following, which I most distinctly remember, was an exclamation from a great character—great in occasional instances of generosity, and daring at times in villanies. He is supposed to meet with a child of misery, and exclaims to himself—

All villain as I am—a damnéd wretch,
A hardened, stubborn, unrepenting sinner,
Still my heart melts at human wretchedness;
And with sincere but unavailing sighs
I view the helpless children of distress:
With tears indignant I behold the oppressor
Rejoicing in the honest man's destruction,
Whose unsubmitting heart was all his crime.—
Ev'n you, ye hapless crew! I pity you;
Ye, whom the seeming good think sin to pity;
Ye poor, despised, abandoned vagabonds,
Whom Vice, as usual, has turn'd o'er to ruin.

Oh! but for friends and interposing Heaven,
I had been driven forth like you forlorn,
The most detested, worthless wretch among you!
O injured God! Thy goodness has endow'd me
With talents passing most of my compeers,
Which I in just proportion have abused—
As far surpassing other common villains
As Thou in natural parts has given me more.

[Notwithstanding the author's own authority for classing the foregoing with his very earliest efforts in poetical composition, it seems to have undergone revision and amendment at a later period. The copy we print from is perhaps a stray leaf of the Common-place Book, or manuscript collection of his early pieces, referred to by Alexander Smith as having been presented by Burns to Mrs. Dunlop. It varies somewhat from the copy inserted in the original Common-place Book now at Greenock. The version we adopt has the following heading—

A Fragment in the Hour of Remorse, on Seeing a Fellow-Creature in Misery, whom I had once known in Better Days.

The "human wretchedness" deplored in this pathetic soliloquy was that of the suffering household at Mount Oliphant, which the poet has so touchingly recorded in his autobiography. We have in these lines a glance at the tyrant factor, and his "insolent, threatening epistles, which used to set us all in tears,"—

With tears indignant I behold the oppressor
Rejoicing in the honest man's destruction,
Whose unsubmitting heart was all his crime,

in which last line we discern the "stubborn, ungainly integrity" of the poet's noble father. The speaker's sympathy for "poor, despised, abandoned vagabonds," corresponds in spirit with that passage in the Common-place Book, of date March, 1784, where he introduces this Fragment. Cromek, in 1808, first published the piece; but his copy wants the five closing lines, which accordingly we infer were added by the poet in 1784. Cromek's version was printed from a copy found among the poet's papers, headed with the introductory narrative prefixed to the text. It is curious to find Burns thus early attempting dramatic composition; but it is certain that William Burness had a few of Shakespeare's plays among the books on his shelf at Mount Oliphant.]

THE TARBOLTON LASSES.

(CHAMBERS, 1851.)

IF ye *gae* up to yon *hill-tap*, go hill-top
Ye'll there see bonie Peggy;
She *kens* her father is a *laird*, knows land-owner
And she forsooth's a *leddy*. lady

There Sophy tight, a lassie bright,
Besides a handsome fortune:
Wha canna win her in a night, who cannot
Has little art in courtin.

Gae down by Faile,* and taste the ale,
And tak a look o' *Mysie;* Maria
She's *dour* and *din*, a deil within, sullen sallow
But *aiblins* she may please ye. haply

If she be shy, her sister try,
Ye'll *may be* fancy Jenny; perhaps
If ye'll dispense wi' want o' sense—
She *kens* hersel she's bonie. knows

As ye gae up by yon hillside,
Speer in for bonie Bessy; call and inquire
She'll gie ye a *beck*, and bid ye light, curtsey
And handsomely address ye.

There's few sae bonie, *nane sa guid*, none so good
In a' King George' dominion;
If ye should doubt the truth o' this—
It's Bessy's *ain* opinion! own

* Hamlet of Faile, near Tarbolton.—J. H.

[Here we have a little of the "satirical seasoning" referred to by David Sillar, in note to next piece, and of which we have already seen a good sample in his address to "Saucy Tibbie." These verses, however, can hardly be considered as a song, and —as Chambers has observed—they are strikingly inferior to the poet's average efforts. It is rather singular that Chambers does not state where he got these lines, and on what grounds he became satisfied of their authenticity.]

AH, WOE IS ME, MY MOTHER DEAR.

Paraphrase of Jeremiah, 15th Chap., 10th verse.

(GLENRIDDELL MSS., 1874.)

AH, woe is me, my Mother dear!
  A man of strife ye've born me:
For *sair* contention I *maun* bear : sore must
  They hate, revile, and scorn me;

I ne'er could lend on bill or *band*, bond
  That five per cent. might *blest* me; have blest
And borrowing, on the *tither* hand, other
  The *de'il a ane wad* trust me. D—l a one would

Yet I, a *coin-deniéd* wight, penniless
  By Fortune quite discarded;
Ye see how I am, day and night,
  By lad and lass blackguarded!

[Burns in 1785 records the remark—"I don't well know what is the reason of it, but somehow or other though I am, when I have a mind, pretty generally beloved; yet I never could get the art of commanding *respect.*" Again, referring to his early boyhood, he says in his autobiography:—"At those years, I was by no means a favorite with anybody." David Sillar, speaking of Burns in 1781, says:—"His social disposition easily procured him acquaintances; but a certain satirical seasoning, while it set the rustic circle in a roar, was not unaccompanied by its kindred attendant,—suspicious fear. I recollect hearing his neighbours

observe *he had a great deal to say for himself*, but that they suspected his *principles*. He wore the only tied hair in the parish; and in the church, his plaid, which was of a particular colour, I think *fillemot*,* was wrapped in a particular manner round his shoulders." The poet's account of himself in the text has suggested the above quotations; but we feel rather at a loss to fix the particular period of composition. The verses stand recorded in the Glenriddell volume at Liverpool, in the poet's autograph, without any indication of date; but it may be assumed that he would be at least twenty-one years old before he could be concerned in "bills and bonds."

A corrupt copy of the verses occurs in the *Ettrick Shepherd's* Memoir of Burns, 1834, where they are entitled "Stanzas composed while sitting between the stilts of the plough." It seems that Burns had inscribed this paraphrase from Jeremiah on the fly-leaf of his own copy of Fergusson's Poems. That relic is now in the possession of J. T. Gibson-Craig, Esq., Edinburgh. Hogg may have seen that production, and quoted the words from memory. The words paraphrased are as follows:—"Woe is me, my mother, thou hast born me a man of strife, and a man of contention to the whole earth. I have neither lent on usury, nor men have lent to me on usury; yet every one of them doth curse me."]

MONTGOMERIE'S PEGGY.

(Cromek, 1808.)

Altho' my bed were in yon muir,
  Amang the heather, in my plaidie;
Yet happy, happy would I be,
  Had I my dear Montgomerie's Peggy.

When o'er the hill beat surly storms,
  And winter nights were dark and rainy;
I'd seek some dell, and in my arms
  I'd shelter dear Montgomerie's Peggy.

Were I a Baron proud and high,
  And horse and servants waiting ready;
Then a' '*twad gie o'* joy to me,— 'twould give of
  The *sharin't* with Montgomerie's Peggy. sharing of it

* A yellow-brown colour—from *feuille morte*, a dead leaf.

[Speaking of the earlier portion of the seven years he spent in Tarbolton Parish (1777 to 1784), the poet says he felt as much pleasure in being in the secret of half the amours in the parish, as ever did Premier in knowing the intrigues of half the courts in Europe. "Montgomerie's Peggy," he tells us, was a deity of his own for six or eight months. "I began the affair," he says, "merely in a *gaieté de cœur*, or, to tell the truth (what would scarcely be believed), a vanity of showing my parts in courtship, particularly my abilities at a *billet-doux*, which I always piqued myself upon, made me lay siege to her." Mrs. Begg, in her notes regarding this affair, says:—"The lady was housekeeper at Coilsfield House; my brother Robert had met her frequently at Tarboth Mill; they sat in the same church, and contracted an intimacy together; but she was engaged to another before ever they met. So, on her part, it was nothing but amusement, and on Burns' part, little more, from the way he speaks of it."] (The Rev. Geo. Gilfillan, in his edition, says she became Mrs. Derbishire, and lived in London.—J. H.)

THE PLOUGHMAN'S LIFE.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

As I was a-wand'ring *ae* morning in spring, one
I heard a young ploughman *sae* sweetly to sing; so
And as he was singin', *thir* words he did say,— these
There's *nae* life like the ploughman's in the month o'
sweet May. no

lark from
The *lav'rock* in the morning she'll rise *frae* her nest,
And mount i' the air wi' the dew on her breast,
And wi' the merry ploughman she'll whistle and sing,
And at night she'll return to her nest back again.

[Gilbert Burns expressed to Cromek a strong doubt regarding his brother's authorship of these lines, as also of some other pieces found in his handwriting, and included with the *Reliques* of the Poet; but as the authorship of the "Bonie Muirhen"—one of the pieces referred to—has been since clearly traced to Burns, we do not feel at liberty to reject the lines in the text.]

THE RONALDS OF THE BENNALS.

(CHAMBERS, 1851.)

IN Tarbolton, ye *ken*, there are proper young men, know
And proper young lasses and a', man;
But ken ye the Ronalds that live in the Bennals,
They carry the gree frae them a',* man.

Their father's a *laird*, and weel he can spare't, land-owner
Braid money to *tocher* them a', man; broad dower
To proper young men, he'll *clink* in the hand count
Gowd guineas a hundred or twa, man. gold

There's ane they *ca'* Jean, I'll warrant ye've seen call
As bonie a lass or as *braw*, man; finely dressed
But for sense and guid taste she'll vie wi' the best,
And a conduct that beautifies a', man.

The charms o' the *min'*, the langer they shine, mind
The *mair* admiration they draw, man; more
While peaches and cherries, and roses and lilies,
They fade and they wither awa, man.

If ye be for Miss Jean, tak this *frae a frien'* from a friend
A hint o' a rival or twa, man;
The Laird o' Blackbyre *wad gang* through the fire,
If that wad entice her awa, man. would go

The Laird o' Braehead has been on his speed,
For mair than a *towmond* or twa, man; twelve months
The Laird o' the Ford will *straught on a board*, be laid out dead
If he *canna* get her at a', man. cannot

---

* Bear the palm from them all.

Then Anna comes in, the pride o' her kin,
  The boast of our bachelors a', man:
Sae *sonsy* and sweet, sae fully complete, buxom
  She steals our affections awa, man.

If I should detail the pick and the *wale* choice
  O' lasses that live *hereawa*, man, hereabout
The *fau't* wad be mine if they didna shine fault
  The sweetest and best o' them a', man.

I lo'e her mysel, but *darena weel* tell, dare not well
  My poverty keeps me in awe, man;
For making o' rhymes, and working at times,
  Does little or *naething at a'*, man. nothing at all

Yet I *wadna* choose to let her refuse, would not
  Nor *hae't* in her power to say na, man: have it
For though I be poor, unnoticed, obscure,
  My stomach's as proud as them a', man.

Though I canna ride in weel-booted pride,
  And flee o'er the hills like a *craw*, man, crow
I can *haud* up my head wi' the best o' the breed, hold
  Though fluttering ever so *braw*, man. fine

My coat and my vest, they are Scotch o' the best,
  O' pairs o' guid *breeks* I *hae* twa, man; breeches have
And stockings and pumps to put on my stumps,
  And ne'er a wrang *steek* in them a', man. stitch

My *sarks* they are few, but five o' them new, shirts
  Twal' hundred,* as white as the snaw, man,
A ten-shillings hat, a Holland cravat;
  There are no mony poets sae *braw*, man. fine

---

* Woven in a reed of 1200 divisions, and therefore considerably coarser than the "1700 linen" spoken of in *Tam o' Shanter*.

I never had *freens weel stockit in* means, friends well supplied with
  To leave me a hundred or twa, man;
Nae *weel-tocher'd* aunts, to wait on their *drants*, well-dower'd whims
  And wish them in hell for it a', man.

I never was *cannie* for hoarding o' money, prudent
  Or *claughtin 't* together at a', man; grasping it
I've little to spend, and naething to lend,
  But deevil a shilling I *awe*, man. owe

[The Bennals is a farm in the western part of the parish of Tarbolton, near Afton Lodge, about five miles from Lochlea. The two young women spoken of in this piece were the predominant belles of the district; being good-looking, fairly educated, and the children of a man reputed wealthy. Gilbert Burns wooed the elder sister, Jeanie Ronald, who, after a lengthened correspondence, refused him on account of his poverty. She became the wife of John Reid, a farmer at Langlands, not far from the Bennals. The younger sister, Annie, appears to have taken the poet's fancy a little; but he was too proud to afford her a chance of refusing him.

A few years after this period, one of the bard's letters gives us a glimpse of the "ups and downs of life" in connection with the *Ronalds of the Bennals.* Writing to his brother William in November, 1789, he says:—"The only Ayrshire news that I remember in which I think you will be interested, is that Mr. Ronald is bankrupt. You will easily guess, that from his insolent vanity in his sunshine of life, he will feel a little retaliation from those who thought themselves eclipsed by him."

Chambers has neglected to state whence he derived these verses; he merely indicates that they had appeared fugitively somewhere before he gave them a fixed place among the author's works. The small lairdships referred to in the fifth and sixth verses cannot be found in the Ordnance Map of Tarbolton parish; but more than one "Braehead" appears in the neighbouring parishes. "Ford" may be a contraction of Failford, near Tarbolton.]

SONG—HERE'S TO THY HEALTH.

(Johnson's Museum, 1796.)

Here's to thy health, my bonie lass,
  Gude night and joy be wi' thee;

I'll come *nae mair* to thy bower-door, no more
  To tell thee that I *lo'e* thee. love
O *dinna* think, my pretty pink, do not
  But I can live without thee:
I vow and swear I dinna care,
  How lang ye look about ye.

Thou'rt ay sae free informing me,
  Thou hast nae mind to marry;
I'll be as free informing thee,
  Nae time *hae* I to tarry: have
I *ken* thy *freens* try *ilka* means know friends every
  Frae wedlock to delay thee; from
Depending on some higher chance,
  But fortune may betray thee.

I ken they scorn my low estate,
  But that does never grieve me;
For I'm as free as any *he;* man
  Sma' siller will relieve me. little
I'll count my health my greatest wealth,
  Sae lang as I'll enjoy it;
I'll fear nae *scant*, I'll *bode* nae want, scarcity forbode
  As lang's as I get employment.

But far off fowls hae feathers fair,
  And, ay until ye try them,
Tho' they seem fair, still have a care;
  They may prove as bad as I am.
But at twal at night, when the moon shines bright,
  My dear, I'll come and see thee;
For the man that loves his mistress weel,
  Nae travel makes him weary.

[Against our own instincts, we were at one time disposed to exclude this production from Burns' collected pieces, in deference to the dictum of his sister, Mrs. Begg, who pronounced it to be one of those familiar ditties commonly sung at rural firesides before his efforts in that way were known. The poet sent the song, along

with its very sprightly melody, to Johnson at some unascertained period; but it did not appear in the *Museum* till the year of the author's death, and his name is there attached to it. The words are not found in any collection of date prior to their publication in Johnson's work; and as Mrs. Begg would be no more than ten years old when, as we conjecture, this song was composed by her brother, she might naturally, at some after period, mistake it for an old song. It is in every respect characteristic of Burns' manner and sentiments in early manhood; and the strathspey tune to which it is set, suggests his early dancing-school experiences, and the occasional balls of the Tarbolton Bachelors.]

THE LASS OF CESSNOCK BANKS.*

(ALDINE ED., 1839.)

ON Cessnock banks a lassie dwells,
  Could I describe her shape and mien;
Our lasses a' she far excels,
  An' she has twa sparkling rogueish *een.* eyes

She's sweeter than the morning dawn,
  When rising Phœbus first is seen;
And dew-drops twinkle o'er the lawn;
  An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

She's stately like yon youthful ash,
  That grows the cowslip *braes* between, heights
And drinks the stream with vigour fresh;
  An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

She's spotless like the flow'ring thorn,
  With flow'rs so white and leaves so green,
When purest in the dewy morn;
  An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

---

*Cessnock "Water," flows from the southeast, passes close by Mauchline and Mossgiel, and falls into the Irvine about midway between Kilmarnock and Galston.—J. H.

Her looks are like the vernal May,
  When ev'ning Phœbus shines serene;
While birds rejoice on every spray;
  An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

Her hair is like the curling mist,
  That climbs the mountain-sides at e'en,
When flow'r-reviving rains are past;
  An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

Her forehead's like the show'ry bow,
  When gleaming sunbeams intervene
And gild the distant mountain's brow;
  An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

Her cheeks are like yon crimson gem,
  The pride of all the flowery scene,
Just opening on its thorny stem;
  An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

Her bosom's like the nightly snow,
  When pale the morning rises keen;
While hid the murm'ring streamlets flow;
  An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

Her lips are like *yon* cherries ripe, yonder
  That sunny walls from Boreas screen;
They tempt the taste and charm the sight;
  An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

Her teeth are like a flock of sheep,
  With fleeces newly washen clean;
That slowly mount the rising steep;
  An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

Her breath is like the fragrant breeze,
  That gently stirs the blossom'd bean;
When Phœbus sinks behind the seas;
  An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

Her voice is like the ev'ning thrush,
  That sings on Cessnock banks unseen;
While his mate sits nestling in the bush;
  An' she has twa sparkling rogueish een.

But it's not her air, her form, her face,
  Tho' matching beauty's fabled queen;
'Tis the mind that shines in ev'ry grace,
  An' chiefly in her rogueish een.

[This must have been composed just before the poet's short sojourn in the town of Irvine. He was passionately in love with the subject of this poem, or "Song of Similes," as it has been called. Her name was Ellison Begbie, her father being a small farmer in Galston parish, and she herself at that time in service with a family who resided near Cessnock water, about two miles northeast from Lochlea. Burns has made no distinct reference to her in his autobiography, although she seems to have been the heroine of a few of his most admired lyrics. His sister, Mrs. Begg, about thirty years ago, first revealed the fact that the four love-letters to "My dear E." in Currie's first edition (and which were withdrawn from subsequent issues of that work) were addressed to Ellison Begbie, who, after some intimacy and correspondence, rejected his suit, and soon married another lover. Referring to his desponding condition at Irvine, he writes:—"To crown my distress, a *belle-fille* whom I adored, and who had pledged her soul to meet me in the field of matrimony, jilted me with peculiar circumstances of mortification." This misleading allusion, viewed in connection with the letters he addressed to her, and with what he had written in his Commonplace Book about "Montgomerie's Peggy," created much confusion in the minds of the poet's annotators, until Mrs. Begg set these matters right.

As might be predicated of one who could inspire sentiments and imagery like those contained in these verses, the subject of them is described by the poet's sister as having been a superior person, and a general favourite in her neighbourhood. Burns himself, in

one of his letters, thus addresses her :—"All these charming qualities, heightened by an education much beyond anything I have ever met in any woman I ever dared to approach, have made an impression on my heart that I do not think the world can ever efface."

Cromek, in 1808, first made the world acquainted with this production, in a somewhat imperfect form. He traced out the subject of it as a married lady resident in Glasgow, and from her own lips noted down the words to the extent of her recollection. Pickering's version, here given, was printed from the poet's manuscript, recovered from some other source. A whole stanza is devoted to each of her charms, commencing with her "twa sparkling rogueish een," and embracing every personal and mental grace. At verse six he comes to her *hair*, and thereafter in succession he descants on her *forehead*, her *cheeks*, her *bosom*, her *lips*, her *teeth*, her *breath*, her *voice*, and lastly her *mind*. At verse nine, through an awkward inadvertency in transcribing, he sets down "Her teeth" instead of "Her bosom," to which the similitude used very appropriately applies; and the *teeth* of his charmer have full justice done them in stanza eleven. This slip of the pen on the transcriber's part we have here corrected. In the MS. the author has directed the words to be sung to the tune of "If he be a butcher neat and trim"—whatever that air may be; which confirms his own statement that he could never compose a lyric without *crooning* a melody in his mind, to aid his inspiration and regulate the rhythm of his verses.]

SONG—BONIE PEGGY ALISON.

Tune—"The Braes o' Balquhidder."

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1788.)

Chor.—And I'll kiss thee yet, yet,
And I'll kiss thee o'er again;
And I'll kiss thee yet, yet,
My bonie Peggy Alison.

Ilk care and fear when thou art near, each
I ever mair defy them, O!

Young kings upon their hansel throne *
  Are no sae blest as I am, O!
    And I'll kiss thee yet, yet, &c.

When in my arms, wi' a' thy charms,
  I clasp my countless treasure, O!
I seek *nae mair* o' Heaven to share — no more
  Than *sic* a moment's pleasure, O! — such
    And I'll kiss thee yet, yet, &c.

And by thy *een sae* bonie blue, — eyes so
  I swear I'm thine for ever, O!
And on thy lips I seal my vow,
  And break it shall I never, O!
    And I'll kiss thee yet, yet, &c.

[This and the song which immediately follows (*Mary Morison*) long went wandering in search of the living originals; but no fair damsels nor *sonsie lasses* in the parish of Tarbolton, bearing such names, were ever heard of. The poet, in sending the latter song to George Thomson, expressly told him it was "a juvenile production;" and as he at the same time admitted that all his earlier love-songs were the breathings of real passion—a legend of his heart being inscribed on each of them—a "heroine-hunt" for the inspirers of them was the eventful result. Gilbert Burns was applied to for information regarding *Mary Morison*, and he replied that she was also the subject of some light verses, beginning, "And I'll kiss thee yet." This clue suggested to the present writer that the poet had simply disguised these juvenile productions by altering the names a little. Mrs. Begg's information regarding her brother's earnest passion for the *Lass of Cessnock Banks*—Ellison, or Alison Begbie, by name—started the natural idea that Burns must have attempted to weave her name into some snatch of song. Her surname, however, being so very prosaic and untunable, what was a poor poet to do? His object could be attained only by compromise, and that might be accomplished to some extent by transposing *Alison Begbie* into "Peggy Alison." Let us take for granted that such was the case with

* "Hansel" means the *first-fruit* of an achievement, or of a particular field, or season; hence a gift at some particular season, at the New Year, or on some particular occasion, is so called. The term "maiden throne" would explain the poet's phrase here.—J. H.

the song in our text, and then it follows that *Ellison Begbie* was also the inspirer of its charming companion-song, *Mary Morison.* The character of "My dear E," is displayed in every line of it:—

A thought ungentle canna be
The thought of Peggy Ellison.

Only the two latter stanzas of the text, with the chorus, are given in Johnson's publication. The opening verse is from Cromek (1808). Stephen Clarke, the musical editor of the *Museum*, inscribed on the printer's copy of the music his feelings in these words:—"I am charmed with this song *almost* as much as the lover is with Peggy Alison."]

SONG—MARY MORISON.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

O MARY, at thy window be,
It is the wish'd, the *trysted* hour! appointed
Those smiles and glances let me see,
That make the miser's treasure poor:
How blythely wad I *bide the stoure*, endure the turmoil
A weary slave *frae* sun to sun, from
Could I the rich reward secure,
The lovely Mary Morison.

Yestreen, when to the trembling string yester-even
The dance *gaed* thro' the lighted ha', went
To thee my fancy took its wing,
I sat, but neither heard nor saw:
Tho' this was fair, and that was *braw*, gay
And yon the toast of a' the town,
I sigh'd, and said amang them a',
"Ye are *na* Mary Morison." not

Oh, Mary, canst thou wreck his peace,
Wha for thy sake *wad* gladly die? would
Or canst thou break that heart of his,
Whase only *faut* is loving thee? whose fault

If love for love thou wilt *na gie*, not give
At least be pity to me shown;
A thought ungentle *canna* be cannot
The thought o' Mary Morison."

[The long note to the preceding song will help to shorten this one, as it is held to apply to the same subject. The "trembling string," and the "lighted ha'" of the *second stanza* could in reality refer only to the earnest efforts of a poor fiddler at a village practising on the sanded floor of some school-room; yet see how the poet's fancy can "take its wing," and exalt the commonest object. Hazlitt says, in respect to this lyric,—"Of all the productions of Burns, the pathetic and serious love-songs which he has left behind him, in the manner of old ballads, are perhaps those which take the deepest and most lasting hold of the mind. Such are the lines to 'Mary Morison,' those beginning 'Here's a health to ane I loe dear;' and the song 'O my love is like a red, red rose.'"

The tune to which the poet composed this song was "Duncan Davidson" which is capable of much pathos when performed in slow time. However, that air having been already well-suited with "canty" words, the late John Wilson, Scottish vocalist, conferred an accession of popularity to *Mary Morison* by wedding her to "The Miller," a beautiful tune of the same character as that selected by Burns.]

WINTER: A DIRGE.

(Kilmarnock Ed., 1786.)

As I am what the men of the world, if they knew of such a man, would call a whimsical mortal, I have various sources of pleasure and enjoyment which are in a manner peculiar to myself, or some here and there such other out-of-the-way person. Such is the peculiar pleasure I take in the season of Winter more than the rest of the year. This, I believe, may be partly owing to my misfortunes giving my mind a melancholy cast; but there is something even in the

Mighty tempest and the hoary waste
Abrupt and deep stretch'd o'er the buried earth,

which raises the mind to a serious sublimity, favorable to every thing great and noble. There is scarcely any earthly

object gives me more—I don't know if I should call it pleasure, but something which exalts me, something which enraptures me, than to walk in the sheltered side of a wood or high plantation in a cloudy winter day, and hear a stormy wind howling among the trees and raving o'er the plain. It is my best season for devotion; my mind is rapt up in a kind of enthusiasm to Him who, in the pompous language of Scripture, "walks on the wings of the wind." In one of these seasons, just after a tract of misfortunes, I composed the following song,—Tune, "M'Pherson's Farewell."—*Common-place Book, April, 1784.*

THE wintry west extends his blast,
  And hail and rain does *blaw;* blow
Or, the stormy north sends driving forth
  The blinding sleet and *snaw:* snow
While, tumbling brown, the *burn* comes down, rivulet
  And roars *frae* bank to *brae;* from height
And bird and beast in covert rest,
  And pass the heartless day.

"The sweeping blast, the sky o'ercast,"*
  The joyless winter day
Let others fear, to me more dear
  Than all the pride of May:
The tempest's howl, it soothes my soul,
  My griefs it seems to join;
The leafless trees my fancy please,
  Their fate resembles mine!

Thou Power Supreme whose mighty scheme
  These woes of mine fulfil,
Here, firm I rest; they must be best,
  Because they are Thy will!
Then all I want—O do Thou grant
  This one request of mine!—
Since to enjoy Thou dost deny,
  Assist me to *resign.* to be resigned

*Dr. Young.—*R. B.*

[We concur with Chambers in assigning the date of this piece to the time of the poet's residence in Irvine, during the winter of 1781–82. Writing in April, 1784, the author tells us that he composed it at the period referred to in his head-note to the following Prayer, "just after a tract of misfortunes." This corresponds with the tone of his melancholy letter to his father, written from Irvine, and also with what he narrates in his autobiography, of his partner in trade having robbed him, and his flax-dressing shop, taking fire on New Year's morning, 1782, by which he was left "like a true poet, not worth a sixpence."]

A PRAYER UNDER THE PRESSURE OF VIOLENT ANGUISH.

(Edinburgh Ed., 1787.)

There was a certain period of my life that my spirit was broke by repeated losses and disasters, which threatened and indeed effected the utter ruin of my fortune. My body, too, was attacked by that most dreadful distemper, a hypochondria or confirmed melancholy; in this wretched state, the recollection of which makes me yet shudder, I hung my harp on the willow trees, except in some lucid intervals, in one of which I composed the following:—

O Thou Great Being! what Thou art,
  Surpasses me to know;
Yet sure I am, that known to Thee
  Are all Thy works below.

Thy creature here before Thee stands,
  All wretched and distrest;
Yet sure those ills that wring my soul
  Obey Thy high behest.

Sure Thou, Almighty, canst not act
  From cruelty or wrath!
O, free my weary eyes from tears,
  Or close them fast in death!

But, if I must afflicted be,
  To suit some wise design;
Then man my soul with firm resolves,
  To bear and not repine!

[The composition of these verses must be assigned to the same period as that of the foregoing. Writing in December, 1787, to his Irvine acquaintance, Richard Brown, the poet thus remarked: —"Do you recollect the Sunday we spent together in Eglinton woods? You told me, on my repeating some verses to you, that you wondered I could resist the temptation of sending verses of such merit to a magazine. It was from this remark I derived that idea of my own pieces which encouraged me to endeavour at the character of a poet."]

PARAPHRASE OF THE FIRST PSALM.

(EDINBURGH ED., 1787.)

THE man in life wherever plac'd,
  Hath happiness in store,
Who walks not in the wicked's way,
  Nor learns their guilty lore!

Nor from the seat of scornful pride
  Casts forth his eyes abroad,
But with humility and awe
  Still walks before his God.

That man shall flourish like the trees,
  Which by the streamlets grow;
The fruitful top is spread on high,
  And firm the root below.

But he whose blossom buds in guilt
  Shall to the ground be cast,
And, like the rootless stubble, tost
  Before the sweeping blast.

For why? that God the good adore,
  Hath giv'n them peace and rest,
But hath decreed that wicked men
  Shall ne'er be truly blest.

[This and the Psalm immediately following evidently belong to the same period of the author's life as the two preceding pieces.]

THE FIRST SIX VERSES OF THE NINETIETH PSALM VERSIFIED.

(EDINBURGH ED., 1787.)

O THOU, the first, the greatest friend
  Of all the human race!
Whose strong right hand has ever been
  Their stay and dwelling-place!

Before the mountains heav'd their heads
  Beneath Thy forming hand,
Before this ponderous globe itself,
  Arose at Thy command;

That Pow'r which rais'd and still upholds
  This universal frame,
From countless, unbeginning time
  Was ever still the same.

Those mighty periods of years
  Which seem to us so vast,
Appear no more before thy sight
  Than yesterday that's past.

Thou giv'st the word: Thy creature, man,
  Is to existence brought;
Again Thou says't, "Ye sons of men,
  Return ye into nought!"

Thou layest them, with all their cares,
  In everlasting sleep;
As with a flood Thou tak'st them off
  With overwhelming sweep.

They flourish like the morning flow'r,
  In beauty's pride array'd;
But long ere night—cut down, it lies
  All wither'd and decay'd.

A PRAYER IN THE PROSPECT OF DEATH.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

O THOU unknown, Almighty Cause
  Of all my hope and fear!
In whose dread presence, ere an hour,
  Perhaps I must appear!

If I have wander'd in those paths
  Of life I ought to shun—
As something loudly in my breast,
  Remonstrates I have done—

Thou know'st that Thou hast formèd me
  With passions wild and strong;
And list'ning to their witching voice
  Has often led me wrong.

Where human weakness has come short,
  Or frailty stept aside,
Do Thou, All-Good—for such Thou art—
  In shades of darkness hide.

Where with intention I have err'd,
  No other plea I have,
But, Thou art good; and Goodness still
  Delighteth to forgive.

[This composition appears, under the date of August, 1784, in the Common-place Book, as "A Prayer when fainting fits and other alarming symptoms of a pleurisy, or some other dangerous disorder, which indeed still threaten me, first put nature on the alarm." These words distinctly point back to a date more or less remote; consequently those editors who have assumed this Prayer and its relative prose passage to apply to the Mossgiel period of the author's life are at fault in their chronology. The verses are marked by extraordinary vigour, and have been much criticised by those who will be content with no religious poetry, except such as deals in substitutional salvation.]

(Chambers gives the date as 1784. The style of composition is very far superior to and more finished than anything in his Mount Oliphant period. It seems to me to be quite in keeping with his twenty-fifth year. The second and third stanzas especially are not the expressions of a mere youth. It was at Lochlea, says Gilbert Burns, that "the foundation was laid of certain habits in my brother's character, which afterwards became but too prominent." This poem was written, then, at least a considerable time after he went to Lochlea, and quite probably when he was at Mossgiel.—J. H.)

STANZAS, ON THE SAME OCCASION.

(Edinburgh Ed., 1787.)

Why am I loth to leave this earthly scene?
  Have I so found it full of pleasing charms—
Some drops of joy with draughts of ill between—
  Some gleams of sunshine 'mid renewing storms?
Is it departing pangs my soul alarms?
  Or death's unlovely, dreary, dark abode?
For guilt, for guilt, my terrors are in arms:
  I tremble to approach an angry God,
And justly smart beneath His sin-avenging rod.

Fain would I say, "Forgive my foul offence!"
  Fain promise never more to disobey;
But, should my Author health again dispense,
  Again I might desert fair virtue's way;
Again in folly's path might go astray;
  Again exalt the brute and sink the man;
Then how should I for heavenly mercy pray,
  Who act so counter heavenly mercy's plan?
Who sin so oft have mourn'd, yet to temptation ran?

O Thou great Governor of all below!
  If I may dare a lifted eye to Thee,
Thy nod can make the tempest cease to blow,
  Or still the tumult of the raging sea:
With that controlling pow'r assist ev'n me,
  Those headlong furious passions to confine,
For all unfit I feel my pow'rs to be,
  To rule their torrent in th' allowèd line;
O, aid me with Thy help, Omnipotence Divine!

[This composition is set down in the poet's Common-place Book immediately following the preceding, and entitled "Misgivings in the Hour of Despondency and Prospect of Death." He copied it from thence into the Stair manuscript of early pieces (now dismembered and scattered abroad). It is there headed—"Misgivings of Despondency on the Approach of the Gloomy Monarch of the Grave." It was also inserted in the manuscript book of like pieces presented to Mrs. Dunlop, under the heading—"Stanzas on the same occasion (as the preceding) in the manner of *Beattie's Minstrel.*" That collection is also cut up and scattered; and these verses, apparently once forming part of it are exhibited within the Burns monument at Edinburgh. On comparing the copy in the text with the earlier ones, we find that the versification underwent some polishing in 1787, to fit it for appearance in the author's Edinburgh edition.

This piece acquires a certain interest from the manner in which Dr. John Brown (author of "Rab and his Friends") has introduced an anecdote concerning it in his little book—"Pet Marjorie: a Story of Child Life Fifty Years Ago" (1863).]

FICKLE FORTUNE: "A FRAGMENT."

(Cromek, 1808.)

Though fickle Fortune has deceived me,
She promis'd fair and perform'd but ill;
Of mistress, friends, and wealth bereav'd me,
Yet I bear a heart shall support me still.—

I'll act with prudence as far as I'm able,
But if success I must never find,
Then come misfortune, I bid thee welcome,
I'll meet thee with an undaunted mind.

[The poet has set this down in his Common-place Book, under date, September, 1785, and thus remarks:—"The above was an extempore, under the pressure of a heavy train of misfortunes, which indeed threatened to undo me altogether. It was just at the close of that dreadful period mentioned (when the prayer 'O Thou great Being' was composed—see p. 28), and though the weather has brightened up a little with me, yet there has always been since, a 'tempest brewing round me in the grim sky' of futurity, which I pretty plainly see will some time or other—perhaps ere long—overwhelm me, and drive me into some doleful dell to pine in solitary, squalid wretchedness."

The reader has already seen, at page 7, the four lines which form the first half of the above fragment. The poet here reproduces them with an important variation in line third, which he appropriately alters from

"Of many a joy and hope bereav'd me."

These eight lines altogether read more like rough prose than measured verse; they have at the same time a certain earnest vigour, and in sentiment are in unison with all he wrote at that period. He says the fragment was constructed "in imitation of an old Scotch song well known among the country ingle-sides," and of that he quotes one verse thus:—

When clouds in skies do come together,
To hide the brightness of the sun,
There will surely be some pleasant weather
When a' *thir* storms are spent and gone.

these

He tells us that he has noted that verse "both to mark the song and tune I mean, and likewise as a debt I owe to the author, as the repeating of that verse has lighted up my flame a thousand times."]

RAGING FORTUNE: FRAGMENT OF SONG.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

O RAGING Fortune's withering blast
  Has laid my leaf full low!
O raging Fortune's withering blast
  Has laid my leaf full low!

My stem was fair, my bud was green,
  My blossom sweet did blow;
The dew fell fresh, the sun rose mild,
  And made my branches grow;

But luckless Fortune's northern storms
  Laid *a'* my blossoms low,— all
But luckless Fortune's northern storms
  Laid a' my blossoms low!

[This sketch was produced at the same time with the preceding. Our poet records in his Common-place Book that he then "set about composing an air in the old Scotch style. I am (he adds) not musical scholar enough to prick down my tune properly, so it can never see the light, . . . but these were the verses I composed to suit it." As we do with the verses at page 38, we omit the capital letter "O" at the end of every second line, to avoid the unpleasant effect in reading.]

IMPROMPTU—"I'LL GO AND BE A SODGER."

(CURRIE, 1800.)

O WHY the deuce should I repine,
  And be an ill foreboder?
I'm twenty-three, and five feet nine,
  I'll go and be a *sodger!* soldier

I gat some *gear* wi' *mickle* care, cash much
I held it weel thegither;
But now it's *gane*, and something *mair*— gone more
I'll go and be a sodger!

[This is the sequel to the poet's previous penitential bemoanings, and apostrophes to "Fickle Fortune." "Come, stubborn pride and unshrinking resolution!"—he wrote to a lady friend, on receipt of what he deemed ruinous intelligence—"accompany me through this, to me, miserable world! Your friendship I think I can count on though I should date my letters from a marching regiment. Early in life, and all my life, I reckoned on a recruiting drum as my forlorn hope."

The poet was now at home from Irvine. He reached Lochlea about the end of March; and Chambers mentions, in 1856, that the stone chimney-piece of the little garret room where Burns slept in his father's house still bore the initials "R. B.," with the date 1782, supposed to have been cut by the poet's own hand. That relic no longer exists.]

(In Burns' day, and long after, seven years was the time required to serve as an apprentice to any trade. Burns, being now twenty-four years of age, was too old to learn a trade; therefore he, like many young men in a similar position, looked to enlisting in the army as a last resource. The Scotch have always been a warlike people. The natural resource of every young Scotchman in difficulty was to enlist. G. G.

SONG—"NO CHURCHMAN AM I."

Tune—"Prepare, my dear Brethren."

(Edinburgh Ed., 1787.)

No churchman am I for to rail and to write,
No statesman nor soldier to plot or to fight,
No sly man of business contriving a snare,
For a big-belly'd bottle's the whole of my care.

The peer I don't envy, I give him his bow;
I scorn not the peasant, tho' ever so low;
But a club of good fellows, like those that are here,
And a bottle like this, are my glory and care.

Here passes the squire on his brother—his horse;
There centum per centum, the cit with his purse;
But see you the *Crown* * how it waves in the air?
There a big-belly'd bottle still eases my care.

The wife of my bosom, alas! she did die;
For sweet consolation to church I did fly;
I found that old Solomon provèd it fair,
That a big-belly'd bottle's a cure for all care.

I once was persuaded a venture to make;
A letter inform'd me that all was to wreck;
But the pursy old landlord just waddl'd up stairs,
With a glorious bottle that ended my cares.

"Life's cares they are comforts" †—a maxim laid down
By the Bard, what d'ye call him? that wore the black gown;
And faith I agree with th' old prig to a hair;
For a big-belly'd bottle's a heav'n of a care.

A STANZA ADDED IN A MASON LODGE.

Then fill up a bumper and make it o'erflow,
And honors Masonic prepare for to throw;
May ev'ry true Brother of the Compass and Square
Have a big-belly'd bottle when harass'd with care.

[We are inclined to set this down as a production of 1782. The Bachelors' Club was instituted at the close of 1780, and the poet was admitted an apprentice Free Mason in July, 1781, just before he proceeded to Irvine. He was passed and raised on 1st October following, on which occasion, if he was present at Tarbolton, he must have travelled from Irvine for the purpose.

The song in the text has none of the elements of popularity

* Burns here refers to the sign of "The Crown Tavern."—J. H.
† Young's "Night Thoughts."—*R. B.*

in it, and seems more like an imitation of an English song than a spontaneous outburst of his own genius. Indeed, in the collection of songs which he studied so much during his boyhood there is one that appears to have been his model: the closing line of one of its stanzas being

"And a big-belly'd bottle's a mighty good thing."]

BALLAD—MY FATHER WAS A FARMER.

Tune—"The weaver and his shuttle, O."

(CROMEK, 1808.)

My father was a farmer upon the Carrick* border,
And carefully he bred me in decency and order;
He bade me act a manly part, though I had ne'er a farthing;
For without an honest manly heart, no man was worth regarding.

Then out into the world my course I did determine;
Tho' to be rich was not my wish, yet to be great was charming:
My talents they were not the worst, nor yet my education:
Resolv'd was I, at least to try, to mend my situation.

In many a way, and vain essay, I courted Fortune's favor;
Some cause unseen still stept between, to frustrate each endeavor;
Sometimes by foes I was o'erpower'd, sometimes by friends forsaken;
And when my hope was at the top, I still was worst mistaken.

---

*Carrick is the southernmost of the three districts into which Ayrshire is divided, and lies between the Doon and the borders of Galloway. Burns' father did not live in Carrick, but in Kyle, close on the Carrick border.—J. H.

Then sore harass'd, and tir'd at last, with Fortune's vain delusion,
I dropt my schemes, like idle dreams, and came to this conclusion:
The past was bad, and the future hid, its good or ill untrièd;
But the present hour was in my pow'r, and so I would enjoy it.

No help, nor hope, nor view had I, nor person to befriend me;
So I must toil, and sweat, and moil, and labour to sustain me;
To plough and sow, to reap and mow, my father bred me early;
For one, he said, to labour bred, was a match for Fortune fairly.

Thus all obscure, unknown, and poor, thro' life I'm doom'd to wander,
Till down my weary bones I lay in everlasting slumber;
No view nor care, but shun whate'er might breed me pain or sorrow;
I live to-day as well's I may, regardless of to-morrow.

But cheerful still, I am as well as a monarch in his palace,
Tho' Fortune's frown still hunts me down, with all her wonted malice:
I make indeed my daily bread, but ne'er can make it farther:
But as daily bread is all I need, I do not much regard her.

When sometimes by my labour, I earn a little money,
Some unforeseen misfortune comes gen'rally upon me;

Mischance, mistake, or by neglect, or my goodnatur'd
folly:
But come what will, I've sworn it still, I'll ne'er be
melancholy.

All you who follow wealth and power with unremitting
ardour,
The more in this you look for bliss, you leave your
view the farther:
Had you the wealth Potosi boasts, or nations to adore
you,
A cheerful, honest-hearted clown I will prefer before
you.

[The poet describes the above as "a wild rhapsody, miserably deficient in versification, but as the sentiments are the genuine feelings of my heart, for that reason I have a particular pleasure in conning it over."

At the close of each line of the ballad, the letter "O" is introduced in the Author's MS. to make it fit the tune to which he composed it. It has a disturbing effect in reading, and therefore we withdraw it from our text for the present. In an after-part of the work the verses will be given *verbatim*, as part of the Common-place Book.]

JOHN BARLEYCORN: A BALLAD.*

(EDINBURGH ED., 1787.)

THERE went three kings into the east,
Three kings both great and high,
And they *hae* sworn a solemn oath — have
John Barleycorn should die.

* This is partly composed on the plan of an old song known by the same name.—*R. B.*

They took a plough and plough'd him down,
  Put clods upon his head,
And they have sworn a solemn oath
  John Barleycorn was dead.

But the cheerful Spring came kindly on,
  And show'rs began to fall;
John Barleycorn got up again,
  And sore surprised them all.

The sultry suns of Summer came,
  And he grew thick and strong;
His head weel arm'd wi' pointed spears,
  That no one should him wrong.

The sober Autumn enter'd mild,
  When he grew wan and pale;
His bending joints and drooping head
  Show'd he began to fail.

His colour sicken'd more and more,
  He faded into age;
And then his enemies began
  To show their deadly rage.

They've *taen* a weapon, long and sharp, taken
  And cut him by the knee;
Then ty'd him fast upon a cart,
  Like a rogue for forgerie.

They laid him down upon his back,
  And cudgell'd him full sore;
They hung him up before the storm,
  And turn'd him o'er and o'er.

They fillèd up a darksome pit
  With water to the brim,
They heavèd in John Barleycorn—
  There, let him sink or swim.

They laid him out upon the floor,
  To work him farther woe;
And still, as signs of life appear'd,
  They toss'd him to and fro.

They wasted, o'er a scorching flame,
  The marrow of his bones;
But a miller us'd him worst of all,
  For he crush'd him 'tween two stones.

And they hae *taen* his very heart's blood, taken
  And drank it round and round;
And still the more and more they drank,
  Their joy did more abound.

John Barleycorn was a hero bold,
  Of noble enterprise;
For if you do but taste his blood,
  'Twill make your courage rise.

'Twill make a man forget his woe;
  'Twill heighten all his joy:
'Twill make the widow's heart to sing,
  'Tho' the tear were in her eye.

Then let us toast John Barleycorn,
  Each man a glass in hand;
And may his great posterity
  Ne'er fail in old Scotland!

[In the Common-place Book this is set down immediately before *Poor Mailie*, and all that we know concerning the date of the two poems is that they were written at Lochlea, prior to the year 1784. Gilbert has said, regarding the date of the latter, that his two younger brothers, William and John, then acted as drivers in the ploughing operations of the poet and himself.

John, in 1782, would be thirteen years old—a very likely age for him to commence duties of that kind; so by this mode of calculation we would arrive at a fair conclusion, were we to hold that *John Barleycorn* and *Poor Mailie* were composed shortly after Burns' return from Irvine in the early spring of 1782. It is not likely that the poet ever saw the ancient ballad of "John Barleycorn" in any collection. A copy in the Pepys' library, at Cambridge, furnished the old version included by Robert Jamieson in his collection of Ballads, 2 vols., 1808. In the poet's note to the Ballad he says:—"I once heard the old song that goes by this name sung, and being very fond of it, and remembering only two or three verses of it, viz., the 1st, 2d and 3d, with some scraps, I have interwoven them here and there in the following piece." The poet could never be induced to correct the defective grammar in the opening line, deeming, we suppose, with Shakespeare, that bad grammar is sometimes a positive beauty. James Hogg had the same feeling in regard to his favourite song "When the kye *comes* hame." In another of Burns' most admired Ballads, —"There *was* five Carlines in the south"—evidently composed on the model of *John Barleycorn*—he retains the "bad grammar," and directs the song to be sung to the tune of *Chevy Chase*. We cannot tell whether that air was the same above referred to, which he "once heard sung."]

THE DEATH AND DYING WORDS OF POOR MAILIE.

THE AUTHOR'S ONLY PET *YOWE*,—AN *UNCO* MOURNFU' TALE. ewe extremely

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

As Mailie, an' her lambs thegither,
Was ae day nibblin on the *tether*, halter
Upon her *cloot* she *coost* a hitch, hoof cast
An' owre she *warsl'd* in the ditch: tumbled struggling
There, groanin, dying, she did lie,
When Hughoc* he cam *doytin* by. walking stupidly

Wi' *glowrin een*, and lifted han's staring eyes
Poor Hughoc like a statue stan's;

* A neibour herd-callant, about three-fourths as wise as other folk.—*R. B.*

He saw her days were near-hand ended,
But, *wae's my heart!* he could na mend it! woe is me
He gaped wide, but naething *spak*, spoke
At length poor Mailie silence *brak*. broke

"O thou, *whase* lamentable face whose
Appears to mourn my wofu' case!
My dying words attentive hear,
An' bear them to my Master dear.

"Tell him, if e'er again he keep
As *muckle gear* as buy a sheep— much cash
O, bid him never tie them *mair*, more
Wi' wicked strings o' hemp or hair!
But *ca'* them out to park or hill, drive
An' let them wander at their will:
So may his flock increase, an' grow
To scores o' lambs, and packs o' *woo'!* wool

"Tell him, he was a Master *kin'* kind
An' ay was guid to me an' mine;
An' now my dying charge I *gie* him, give
My helpless lambs, I trust them wi' him.

"O, bid him save their harmless lives,
Frae dogs, an' *tods*, an' butcher's knives! foxes
But gie them *guid* cow-milk their fill, good
Till they be fit to *fend* themsel; provide for
An' *tent* them duly, e'en an' morn, attend to
Wi' *taets* o' hay an' *ripps* o' corn. small quantities handfuls

"An' may they never learn the *gaets*, ways
Of ither vile, *wanrestfu'* pets— unrestful
To slink thro' *slaps*, an' *reave* an' steal, gaps rob
At stacks o' pease, or stocks o' *kail!* colewort
So may they, like their great *forbears*, ancestors
For *monie* a year come thro' the sheers: many
So wives will gie them bits o' bread,
An' bairns *greet* for them when they're dead. weep

"My poor *toop-lamb*, my son an' heir, tup-lamb
O, bid him breed him up wi' care!
An' if he live to be a beast,
To put some *havins* in his breast! manners

"An' warn him—what I *winna* name will not
To stay content wi' *yowes* at hame; ewes
An' no to *rin* an' wear his *cloots*, run hoofs
Like *ither menseless*, graceless brutes. other unmannerly

"An' *niest*, my *yowie*, silly thing, next little ewe
Gude keep thee *frae* a tether string! from
O, may thou ne'er *forgather up*, hold intercourse
Wi' ony *blastit*, moorland toop; worthless
But ay keep mind to *moop an' mell*, associate
Wi' sheep o' credit like thysel!

"And now, my *bairns*, wi' my last breath, children
I *lea'e* my blessin wi' you *baith*: leave both
An' when you think upo' your mither,
Mind to be kind to *ane anither*. one another

"Now, honest Hughoc, *dinna* fail, do not
To tell my master a' my tale;
An' bid him burn this cursed tether,
An' for thy pains thou'se get my *blather*." bladder

This said, poor Mailie turn'd her head,
An' clos'd her een amang the dead!

[Carlyle considers this the poet's happiest effort of its peculiar kind: he classes it with the *Address to a Mouse*, and the *Auld Farmer's Mare*, but holds that "this has even more of sportive tenderness in it." It was composed—just as we now see it—one afternoon while engaged with his plough on the slopes of Lochlea, his brother Gilbert being at work with his team on another part of the field. The poet's youngest brother, *John*—of whose early

death, by the way, not a syllable has been ever heard—drove the horses, while the musing bard guided his plough in the even rig. Gilbert narrates the incident to this effect:—As they were setting out about noon, with their teams, a curious-looking, awkward boy, named Hugh Wilson, ran up to them in a very excited manner, and with a rueful countenance, announced that poor Mailie had got entangled in her tether and was lying in the ditch. It had never occurred to the terror-stricken "Hughoc" that he might have lent a hand in lifting her up: Mailie, however, was soon rescued from her peril and lived—it is hoped—to see her bairns' bairns. This timely intervention of the half-witted callant was the means of sending down the name of poor Mailie along with his own to distant posterity, for his comical consternation and pathetic interest in her fate suggested the poem to Burns.]

POOR MAILIE'S ELEGY.

(Kilmarnock Ed., 1786.)

Lament in rhyme, lament in prose,
Wi' *saut* tears tricklin down your nose; salt
Our bardie's fate is at a close,
Past a' *remead!* remedy
The last, sad *cape-stane* o' his woes cope-stone
Poor Mailie's dead!

It's no the loss o' *warl's gear*, worldly wealth
That could sae bitter draw the tear,
Or mak our bardie, *dowie*, wear melancholy
The mournin' weed:
He's lost a friend an' *neebor* dear, neighbor
In Mailie dead.

Thro' a' the town she trotted by him;
A lang half-mile she could descry him;
Wi' kindly bleat, when she did spy him,
She ran wi' speed:
A friend mair faithfu' ne'er cam nigh him,
Than Mailie dead.

I *wat* she was a sheep o' sense, wot
An' could behave hersel wi' *mense:* good manners
I'll say't, she never brak a fence,
Thro' thievish greed.
Our bardie, lanely, keeps the *spence** inner room
Sin' Mailie's dead.

Or, if he wanders up the *howe*, valley
Her livin image in her yowe
Comes bleatin till him, owre the *knowe*, knoll
For bits o' bread;
An' down the briny pearls *rowe* roll
For Mailie dead.

She was nae *get* o' moorlan tips, offspring
Wi' *tauted ket*, an' hairy hips; matted fleece
For her *forbears* were brought in ships, ancestors
Frae 'yont the Tweed:
A bonier *fleesh* ne'er cross'd the *clips* fleece shears
Than Mailie's—dead.

Wae worth that man wha first did shape Woe be to
That vile, *wanchancie* thing—a *raep!* unlucky rope
It maks guid fellows *girn* an' gape, grin
Wi' chokin dread;
An' Robin's bonnet wave wi' crape
For Mailie dead.

O, a' ye bards on bonie Doon!
An' wha on Ayr your *chanters* tune! bag-pipes
Come, join the melancholious *croon* chant
O' Robin's reed!
His heart will never get aboon—
His Mailie's dead!

---

* The "spence" (retiring-room or parlor) of a farm house, from being originally generally behind the kitchen or "but," was known also as the "ben." Hence, even when not behind the kitchen, but in the other end of the house, it retained its name of "ben."—J. H.

[That this poem was composed at a period somewhat later than the "Dying Words," is probable from the fact that the "Elegy" is not inscribed in the poet's Common-place Book, while the main poem is recorded there, almost *verbatim* as afterwards published. Dr. Currie informs us (Vol. III., p. 395, Ed. 1801) that in preparing the "Elegy" for the press, the poet substituted the present sixth verse for the following:—

"She was nae get o' coarse, gaunt rams,
Wi' *woo* like goats, and legs like *trams:* wool shafts
She was the flower o' Fairlie lambs—
A famous breed;
Now Robin, *greetin,* chews the hams, weeping
O' Mailie dead."

The substituted stanza is doubtless a great improvement; yet we cannot but regret with Currie that "Fairlie lambs" should lose the honor once intended for them. Fairlie was the first place in Ayrshire where the poet's father, in early manhood, obtained employment.]

SONG—THE RIGS O' BARLEY.

(Kilmarnock Ed., 1786.)

It was upon a Lammas night,
When corn *rigs* are bonie, ridges
Beneath the moon's unclouded light,
I held awa to Annie;
The time flew by, *wi' tentless* heed; with careless
Till, 'tween the late and early,
Wi' sma' persuasion she agreed
To see me thro' the barley.
Corn rigs an' barley rigs,
An' corn rigs are bonie:
I'll ne'er forget that happy night,
Amang the rigs wi' Annie.

The sky was blue, the wind was still,
The moon was shining clearly;
I set her down, wi' right good will,
Amang the rigs o' barley:

THE RIGS O' BARLEY—

"I set her down, wi' right good will,
Amang the rigs o' barley."

I *ken't* her heart was a' my ain; knew
I lov'd her most sincerely;
I kiss'd her *owre* and owre again, over
Amang the rigs o' barley.
Corn rigs, an' barley rigs, &c.

I lock'd her in my fond embrace;
Her heart was beating rarely:
My blessings on that happy place,
Amang the rigs o' barley!
But by the moon and stars so bright,
That shone that hour so clearly!
She ay shall bless that happy night
Amang the rigs o' barley.
Corn rigs, an' barley rigs, &c.

I hae been *blythe* wi' comrades dear; glad
I hae been merry drinking;
I hae been joyfu' gath'rin *gear;* money
I hae been happy thinking:
But a' the pleasures e'er I saw,
Tho' three times doubl'd fairly—
That happy night was worth them a',
Amang the rigs o' barley.
Corn rigs, an' barley rigs, &c.

[We conceive that we cannot be far wrong in setting down this and the four songs which immediately follow as compositions of the period from the summer of 1782 to the close of 1783, when the Burness family was preparing to remove to Mossgiel, and old William Burness, was about to bid them all farewell for ever. Many of the "Annies" of the district have contended for the dubious honor of being the heroine of this warmly-colored, yet highly popular, lyric. The name of Anne Ronald has been mentioned; but, as we have already seen, the poet was content to admire her at a respectful distance. Anne Rankine, daughter of a farmer at Adamhill, within two miles west of Lochlea, and who afterwards became Mrs. Merry, not only "owned the soft impeachment," but to her dying day boasted that she was the Annie of the "Rigs o' Barley." If so, then Gilbert was right when he

told Dr. Currie that "there was often a great disparity between the fair captivator and her attributes" as depicted in song by her lover.

Our poet is said to have, on more than one occasion in after-life, referred to the closing verse of this song as one of his happiest strokes of workmanship.]

SONG—"COMPOSED IN AUGUST."

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

NOW westlin winds and slaught'ring guns
  Bring Autumn's pleasant weather;
The moorcock springs on whirring wings,
  Amang the blooming heather:
Now waving grain, wide o'er the plain,
  Delights the weary farmer;
And the moon shines bright, when I rove at night,
  To muse upon my charmer.

The partridge loves the fruitful *fells*, uplands
  The plover loves the mountains;
The woodcock haunts the lonely dells,
  The soaring *hern* the fountains: heron
Thro' lofty groves the *cushat* roves, wood-pigeon
  The path of man to shun it;
The hazel bush o'erhangs the thrush,
  The spreading thorn the linnet.

Thus ev'ry kind their pleasure find,
  The savage and the tender;
Some social join, and leagues combine,
  Some solitary wander:
Avaunt, away, the cruel sway!
  Tyrannic man's dominion;
The sportsman's joy, the murd'ring cry,
  The flutt'ring, gory pinion!

But, Peggy dear, the ev'ning's clear,
  Thick flies the skimming swallow;
The sky is blue, the fields in view,
  All fading-green and yellow:
Come let us stray our gladsome way,
  And view the charms of Nature;
The rustling corn, the fruited thorn,
  And ev'ry happy creature.

We'll gently walk, and sweetly talk,
  Till the silent moon shine clearly;
I'll grasp thy waist, and, fondly press't,
  Swear how I love thee dearly:
Not vernal show'rs to budding flow'rs,
  Not Autumn to the farmer,
So dear can be as thou to me,
  My fair, my lovely charmer!

[This is "Song Second" (of the author's Edinburgh edition), referred to in his autobiography as "the ebullition of that passion which ended that school business" at Kirkoswald. If the lyric was suggested and partly sketched out when the poet was but in his seventeenth year, we are assured, on the testimony of Mrs. Begg, that at a considerably later period he experienced another love-fit for Kirkoswald Peggy, and corresponded with her, with a view to matrimony. It would be then that he dressed up this finely descriptive composition into its existing form; but as he soon thereafter fell into grief about the subject of his epistle to Rankine, he was forced to abandon the idea of matrimony with Peggy.

We shall again have occasion to advert to this very early inspirer of the poet's passion, when, under date 1786, we give the verses he inscribed on a presentation copy to her of his first edition. Among the bard's letters also will be given one addressed by him to an early Carrick friend, Mr. Thomas Orr, Park, dated 11th Nov., 1784, which throws some light on the present subject.]

SONG—"MY NANNIE, O."

(EDINBURGH ED., 1787.)

BEHIND yon hills where Lugar * flows,
'Mang moors an' mosses many, O,
The wintry sun the day has clos'd,
And I'll awa to Nannie, O.

The westlin wind blaws loud an' *shill;* shrill
The night's baith *mirk* and rainy, O; dark
But I'll get my plaid an' out I'll steal,
An' *owre* the hill to Nannie, O. over

My Nanie's charming, sweet, an' young;
Nae artfu' wiles to win ye, O:
May ill befa' the flattering tongue
That wad beguile my Nannie, O.

Her face is fair, her heart is true;
As spotless as she's bonie, O;
The op'ning *gowan*, *wat* wi' dew, daisy wet
Nae purer is than Nannie, O.

A country lad is my degree,
An' few there be that *ken* me, O; know
But what care I how few they be,
I'm welcome ay to Nannie, O.

---

* "Stinchar," in all the author's editions, including that of 1794; but George Thomson says the poet sanctioned the change in 1792. (Stinchar has local verity in its favor, but, as Burns says to Thomson, "Lugar is the more agreeable modulation of syllables." Lugar is a stream in Kyle, which, rising in Cumnock and flowing northwest by Ochiltree, falls into the Ayr at Barskimming, about a mile south of Mauchline. The Stinchar is a mere streamlet rising in Kirkoswald parish and flowing into the Firth of Clyde, nearly opposite Ailsa Craig.)—J.H.

MY NANNIE, O—"I'm welcome ay to Nannie, O."

My riches a's my penny-fee,*
  An' I *maun* guide it *cannie*, O; must carefully
But *warl's gear* ne'er troubles me, world's wealth
  My thoughts are a'—my Nannie, O.

Our *auld* guidman delights to view old
  His sheep an' *kye* thrive bonie O; cows
But I'm as blythe that *hauds* his *pleugh*, holds plough
  An' has nae care but Nannie, O.

Come weel, come woe, I *care na by;* care not
  I'll tak what Heav'n will sen' me, O:
No other care in life have I,
  But live, an' love my Nannie, O.

[The author, in his Common-place Book, directs this song to be sung to the tune of "As I came in by London, O," which no doubt would be the opening line of some then popular, but now unknown English song, set to the old Scotch air, "My Nanie, O."

A vast deal has been written and said concerning the heroineship of this song. The Rev. Hamilton Paul, who belonged to Ayrshire, and was almost a contemporary of Burns, thus wrote in 1819:—"In Kilmarnock, Burns first saw 'Nanie,' the subject of one of his most popular ballads. She captivated him as well by the charm of her person as by the melody of her voice. As he devoted much of his spare time to her society, and listened to her singing with the most religious attention, her sister observed to him, that he paid more attention to Nanie's singing than he would do to a preaching; he retorted with an oath—'Madam, there's no comparison.'" On the other hand, Gilbert Burns, who was aware that the song was composed before his brother ever spent an hour in Kilmarnock, informed George Thomson, that "Nanie was a farmer's daughter in Tarbolton parish, named Fleming, to whom the poet paid some of that roving attention which he was continually devoting to some one. Her charms were indeed mediocre, and what she had were sexual, which indeed was the characteristic of the greater part of his mistresses. He was no Platonic lover, whatever he might pretend or suppose of himself."

* My small wages are all my wealth.—J. H.

Allan Cunningham and other annotators have, through a misconception of the opening lines of the song, run away with the notion that Nanie belonged to Carrick, like the subject of the preceding lyric. But when we have the poet himself confessing that *Vive l'amour, et vive la bagatelle* were his "sole principles of action," and that when the labors of each day were over, he "spent the evening in the way after his own heart," we must conclude that his rural divinities were not far to seek. It is by no means requisite that the inspirer of this picture of rustic purity should have been named "Nanie." Here the poet sets himself to clothe with suitable words one of our most popular native melodies, and unless he had closed each verse with the familiar name—"My Nanie, O,"—nothing that he could have composed for it could have answered the purpose so well.

The early copy in the Common-place Book does not materially differ from that afterwards published; but at the end of verse first, and at the close of the song, he gives the following chorus:—

"And O my bonie Nanie, O,
My young, my handsome Nanie, O;
Tho' I had the world all at my will,
I would give it all for Nanie, O."

SONG—GREEN GROW THE RASHES.

(Edinburgh Ed., 1787.)

Chor.—Green grow the rashes, O;
Green grow the rashes, O;
The sweetest hours that e'er I spend,
Are spent among the lasses, O.

There's nought but care on ev'ry han',
In every hour that passes, O:
What signifies the life o' man,
An' 'twere na for the lasses, O. if it were not
Green grow, &c.

The *war'ly* race may riches chase, worldly
An' riches still may fly them, O;
An' tho' at last they catch them fast,
Their hearts can ne'er enjoy them, O.
Green grow, &c.

But gie me a *cannie* hour at e'en, quiet
My arms about my dearie, O;
An' war'ly cares, an' war'ly men,
May a' gae *tapsalteerie*, O. topsy-turvy
Green grow, &c.

For you sae *douce*, ye sneer at this; gravely prudent
Ye're nought but senseless asses, O:
The wisest man the warl' e'er saw,
He dearly lov'd the lasses, O.
Green grow, &c.

Auld Nature swears, the lovely dears
Her noblest work she classes, O:
Her prentice han' she try'd on man,
An' then she made the lasses, O.
Green grow, &c.

[The author has nowhere given an indication of the date of this widely popular song. He entered it among other early pieces in his Common-place Book in August, 1784. It may have been then just composed; but a Tarbolton contemporary spoke of it to Chambers, as a Lochlea production, in these terms:—"Burns composed a song on almost every tolerable-looking lass in the parish, and finally one in which he embraced them all." It is certain, however, that its crowning stanza—the last one—was not added till a much later date, perhaps not till he brushed up the song to appear in his Edinburgh volume of 1787. This is proved by the fact that in his early manuscript copies that verse is wanting.

The poet's son Robert, during the period of his retirement in Dumfries, used, in connection with this song, to repeat a stanza added by himself, which deserves preservation as a happy sequel to his father's idea in the closing verse. It is as follows:—

Frae man's ain side the form was made
That a' God's wark surpasses, O;
Man only loes his ain heart's bluid,
Wha dearly loves the lasses, O."

In all the author's printed copies, except in the *Museum*, the word *spend*, in line third of the chorus, is altered to *spent* to the detriment of the poet's grammar. We therefore adhere to the *Museum* copy in that particular, which corresponds with the MS. of the Common-place Book.]

SONG—"INDEED WILL I," QUO' FINDLAY.

Tune—"Lass, an I come near thee."

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1792.)

"*Wha* is that at my bower-door?" who
'O wha is it but Findlay!'
"Then *gae your gate*, ye 'se nae be here:" go your ways
'Indeed *maun I*,' quo' Findlay, must I
"What *make ye*, sae like a thief?" do you
'O come and see,' quo' Findlay;
"Before the morn ye'll work mischief"—
'Indeed will I,' quo' Findlay.

"*Gif* I rise and let you in"— If
'Let me in,' quo' Findlay,
"Ye'll keep me *waukin* wi' your *din*"—awake noise
'Indeed will I,' quo' Findlay,
"In my bower if ye should stay"—
'Let me stay,' quo' Findlay;
"I fear ye'll *bide* till break o' day"— remain
'Indeed will I,' quo' Findlay.

"Here this night if ye remain"—
'I'll remain,' quo' Findlay;
"I dread ye'll learn the *gate* again"— way
'Indeed will I,' quo' Findlay.
"What may pass within this bower"—
'Let it pass,' quo' Findlay;
"Ye *maun* conceal till your last hour"— must
'Indeed will I,' quo' Findlay.

[We consider ourselves justifiable in recording this as a production of the Lochlea period of the author's life. Gilbert Burns assured Cromek that his brother composed it in emulation of a piece in Ramsay's Tea-table Miscellany, called "The auld man's best argument." An old woman in Tarbolton, named Jean Wilson, used to divert him and his companions by singing it with great effect; and Gilbert supposed the poet had not then seen Ramsay's song.

James Findlay, an Officer of Excise in Tarbolton, who afterwards married one of the "belles of Mauchline," was appointed, in March, 1788, to train Burns for the duties of an exciseman. It is by no means improbable that this same Mr. Findlay, or a relative of his, was the hero of the foregoing song.]

REMORSE: A FRAGMENT.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

OF all the numerous ills that hurt our peace—
That press the soul, or wring the mind with anguish,
Beyond comparison the worst are those
By our own folly, or our guilt brought on:
In ev'ry other circumstance, the mind
Has this to say, 'It was no deed of mine:'
But, when to all the evil of misfortune
This sting is added, 'blame thy foolish self!'
Or worser far, the pangs of keen remorse,
The torturing, gnawing consciousness of guilt—
Of guilt, perhaps, where we've involvèd others,
The young, the innocent, who fondly lov'd us;
Nay more, that very love their cause of ruin!
O burning hell! in all thy store of torments
There's not a keener lash!
Lives there a man so firm, who, while his heart
Feels all the bitter horrors of his crime,
Can reason down its agonizing throbs;
And, after proper purpose of amendment,
Can firmly force his jarring thoughts to peace?
O happy, happy, enviable man!
O glorious magnanimity of soul!

[These lines (reminding one of the "Fragment of a Tragedy," at p. 10) are recorded, under date September, 1783, in the poet's first Common-place Book. It is most probable that the poem is set down at its proper date, prompted by keen self-reproaches produced through the effects of immoral indulgence. In his observations which introduce the piece, he seems to take credit to himself for bearing up against his wretchedness with manly firmness, because tempered with a penitential sense of his own misconduct. This spirit he terms "a glorious effort of self-command."]

EPITAPH ON JAMES GRIEVE, *LAIRD* OF BOGHEAD, TARBOLTON.

proprietor

(Orig. Common-place Book, 1784.)

Here lies Boghead amang the dead,
In hopes to get salvation;
But if such as he, in Heav'n may be,
Then welcome—hail! damnation.

[This is the earliest sample of an extensive crop of like facetiæ which the author, to the close of his life, was fond of producing. It is not very complimentary to the poor laird who provoked it; yet, by adopting a very slight variation, the poet, in his Kilmarnock volume, converted this quatrain into a rich compliment to his friend, Gavin Hamilton, thus:—

"The poor man weeps—here Gavin sleeps,
Whom canting wretches blamed;
But with such as he, where'er he be,
May I be saved or damned!"

Boghead lies upwards of a mile due west from Lochlea, and near Adamhill. This epitaph does not accord very well with a gossiping anecdote given by Dr. Waddell conveying the allegation of frequent friendly visits paid by Burns to Boghead during this early period.]

EPITAPH ON WM. HOOD, SENR., IN TARBOLTON.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

HERE *Souter* Hood in death does sleep; shoemaker
To hell if he's *gane* thither, gone
Satan, gie him thy *gear* to keep; cash
He'll *haud* it weel *thegether*. hold together

[The poet printed this with the title "ON A CELEBRATED RULING ELDER." Every annotator hitherto had held it to apply to one of the elders of Mauchline kirk who aided in the persecution of Gavin Hamilton. It now appears, however, that one of the Tarbolton elders had, at a much earlier period, also provoked the poet's hostility—not certainly by his hypocrisy, but by his extreme penuriousness. The epitaph is recorded in the Common-place Book, along with the following, under date April, 1784.]

EPITAPH ON MY OWN FRIEND AND MY FATHER'S FRIEND, WM. MUIR, IN TARBOLTON MILL.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

AN honest man here lies at rest,
As e'er God with his image blest;
The friend of man, the friend of truth,
The friend of age, and guide of youth:
Few hearts like his—with virtue warm'd,
Few heads with knowledge so informed:
If there's another world, he lives in bliss;
If there is none, he made the best of this.

[We take the title of this from the original Common-place Book. Currie's heading is simply "Epitaph on a Friend." This has always been regarded as one of the finest of the poet's numerous compliments, paid in a posthumous form, to hale and hearty

friends. The subject of it was the tenant of "Willie's Mill" of Death and Dr. Hornbook, and a life-long friend of Burns and his relations. He died in 1793.

The opening line reads thus in the early MS.–

Here lies a cheerful, honest breast.]

EPITAPH ON MY EVER HONOURED FATHER.

(Kilmarnock Ed., 1786.)

O ye whose cheek the tear of pity stains,
  Draw near with pious rev'rence, and attend!
Here lie the loving husband's dear remains,
  The tender father, and the gen'rous friend;
The pitying heart that felt for human woe,
  The dauntless heart that fear'd no human pride;
The friend of man—to vice alone a foe;
  For "ev'en his failings leaned to virtue's side."

[It is not likely (although not impossible) that this well-known Epitaph, like the preceding, was composed during the lifetime of the subject of it. We find it recorded on the same page, and under the same date (April, 1784), as that to William Muir in the original Common-place Book. Instead of the opening line, as in the text, he has there written—

"O ye who sympathize with virtue's pains;"

and apparently not satisfied with that, he suggests, at foot of the page—

"O ye whose hearts deceased merit pains."

The improvement effected in that line, as afterwards published, is very striking. The death of William Burnes happened at Lochlea, on 13th February, 1784. These lines of the son were engraved on the father's headstone in Alloway kirkyard; and the reader, in musing over it, is apt to revert to the memorable words of John Murdoch:—"O for a world of men of such dispositions! I have often wished, for the good of mankind, that it were as customary to honor and perpetuate the memory of those who excel in moral rectitude, as it is to extol what are called heroic actions. Then would the mausoleum of the friend of my youth overtop and surpass most of those we see in Westminster Abbey!"]

[The following picture of how the position of affairs during the Colonial struggle was viewed in Scotland, by liberals like Burns, has never been surpassed for graphic force and happy terseness of expression. We do not remember to have seen it heretofore alluded to; we presume the oversight is due to its being "chiefly in the Scottish dialect." Now that we have rendered it intelligible to American readers we believe it will be better appreciated.—J. H.]

BALLAD ON THE AMERICAN WAR.

Tune—"Killiecrankie."

(EDINBURGH ED., 1787.)

WHEN Guildford good our pilot stood,
An' did our *hellim thraw*, man; helm twist
Ae night, at tea, began a plea, one
Within America, man:
Then up they gat the *maskin-pat*, tea-pot
And in the sea did *jaw*, man; pour
An' did nae less, in full congress,
Than quite refuse our law, man.

Then thro' the lakes Montgomery* takes,
I *wat* he was na *slaw*, man; wot slow
Down Lowrie's Burn † he took a turn,
And Carleton did ca', man:
But yet, *whatreck*, he, at Quebec, of what avail
Montgomery-like ‡ did *fa'*, man, fall
Wi' sword in hand, before his band,
Amang his en'mies *a'*, man. all

* General Richard Montgomery invaded Canada, autumn 1775, and took Montreal,—the British commander, Sir Guy Carleton, retiring before him. In an attack on Quebec he was less fortunate, being killed by a storm of grape-shot in leading on his men at Cape Diamond.

† Lowrie's Burn, a pseudonym for the St. Lawrence.

‡ A passing compliment to the Montgomeries of Coilsfield, the patrons of the poet.

Poor Tammy Gage within a cage
  Was kept at Boston-ha',* man;
Till Willie Howe took o'er the *knowe* high ground
  For Philadelphia, † man;
Wi' sword an' gun he thought a sin
  Guid christian *bluid* to draw, man; good blood
But at New-York, *wi'* knife an' fork, with
  Sir-Loin he hackèd sma',‡ man.

Burgoyne *gaed* up, like spur an' whip, went
  Till Fraser brave did *fa'*, man; fall
Then lost his way, *ae* misty day, one
  In Saratoga *shaw*, man.§ forests
Cornwallis fought as lang's he *dought*, was able
  An' did the buckskins claw,‖ man;
But Clinton's glaive frae rust to save,
  He hung it to the *wa'*, man. wall

Then Montague, an' Guildford too,
  Began to fear a fa', man;
And Sackville *dour*, wha stood the *stoure*, stubborn / dust
  The German chief** to *thraw*, man: thwart

---

* General Gage, governor of Massachusetts, was cooped up in Boston by General Washington during the latter part of 1775 and early part of 1776. In consequence of his inefficiency, he was replaced in October of that year by General Howe.

† General Howe removed his army from New York to Philadelphia in the summer of 1777.

‡ Alluding to a *razzia* made by orders of Howe at Peekskill, March, 1777, when a large quantity of cattle belonging to the Americans was destroyed.

§ General Burgoyne surrendered his army to General Gates, at Saratoga, on the Hudson, October, 1776.

‖ Alluding to the active operations of Lord Cornwallis in Virginia, in 1780, all of which ended, however, in his surrender of his army at Yorktown, October, 1781, while vainly hoping for reinforcements from General Clinton at New York.

** The German chief was Baron Steuben, a general of the Revolutionary Army. He was a native of Prussia, and adjutant-general in its army. Being in Paris in 1777, he was invited by St. Germain to go to America, and forthwith set out and joined Washington at Valley Forge. In 1780 he held a command in Virginia, and was on the staff of General Lafayette at the siege of Yorktown. Having spent his whole fortune on his men, Congress, in 1790, voted him an annuity of $2,500 and a township of land in the State of New York.—J. H.

For Paddy Burke, * like ony Turk,
  Nae mercy had at a', man;
An' Charlie Fox threw *by* the box, aside
  An' *lows'd* his tinkler jaw, man. unloosed

Then Rockingham took up the game;
  Till death did on him *ca'*, man; call
When Shelburne meek held up his cheek,
  Conform to gospel law, man:
Saint Stephen's boys, wi' jarring noise,
  They did his measures *thraw*, man; thwart
For North an' Fox united stocks,
  An' bore him to the wa,' man.†

Then clubs and hearts were Charlie's *cartes*, cards
  He swept the stakes awa', man,
Till the diamond's ace, of Indian race,
  Led him a sair *faux pas*, man:‡
The Saxon lads, wi' loud *placads*, plaudits
  On Chatham's boy § did ca', man;
An' Scotland drew her pipe an' blew,
  "Up, Willie, *waur* them a', man!" ‖ worst

Behind the throne then Granville's gone,
  A secret word or twa, man;
While *slee* Dundas arous'd the class sly
  Be-north the Roman wa', man:

---

* Edmund Burke advocated a policy of justice and conciliation towards America, which, had it been adopted, would have averted (at least for a time) the War of Independence.—J. H.

† Lord North's administration was succeeded by that of the Marquis of Rockingham, March, 1782. At the death of the latter in the succeeding July, Lord Shelburne became prime minister, and Mr. Fox resigned his secretaryship. Under his lordship, peace was restored, January, 1783. By the union of Lord North and Mr. Fox, Lord Shelburne was soon after forced to resign in favor of his rivals, the heads of the celebrated coalition.

‡ Fox's famous India Bill, by which his ministry was brought to destruction December, 1783.

§ William Pitt, second son of the Earl of Chatham.—J. H.

‖ A popular Scottish song.

An' Chatham's *wraith*, in heav'nly *graith*, apparition / harness
(Inspirèd *bardies* saw, man), poets
Wi' kindling eyes, cry'd, "Willie, rise!
Would I hae fear'd them a', man?"

But, word an' blow, North, Fox and Co.
Gowff'd Willie like a ba', man; batted
Till Suthron raise, an *coost their claise* cast their clothes
Behind him in a raw, man:
An' Caledon threw by the *drone*, bagpipe
An' did her *whittle* draw, man; sword
An' *swoor* fu' rude, thro' dirt an' bluid, swore
To mak it guid in law, man.*

[With the exception of a very few expressions in the foregoing piece, it does not seem to have attracted popular attention. It was most likely a production of the spring of 1784, although not published in the author's first edition. He applied to the Earl of Glencairn and to Mr. Erskine, Dean of Faculty, for their opinion as to the policy of including it in his Edinburgh volume, and they seem to have approved of it. Dr. Blair very characteristically remarked, on reading the ballad, that "Burns' politics smell of the smithy." This may be true, but the politics of the smithy regarding these matters did ultimately prevail.]

REPLY TO AN ANNOUNCEMENT BY J. RANKINE

THAT A GIRL IN HIS NEIGHBORHOOD WAS WITH CHILD TO THE POET.

(STEWART, 1801.)

I AM a keeper of the law
In some *sma'* points, altho' not *a'*; small all

*In the new parliament called by Mr. Pitt, after his accession to office in the spring of 1784, amidst the many new members brought in for his support, and that of the king's prerogative, there was an exceeding proportion from Scotland.

Some people tell me *gin* I *fa'*, if fall
Ae way or ither, one
The breaking of ae point, tho' sma',
Breaks a' *thegither*.* together

I *hae* been in for't *ance* or twice, have once
And *winna* say *o'er* far for thrice; will not too
Yet never met wi' that surprise
That broke my rest;
But now a rumor's like to rise—
A *whaup's* i' the nest! † curlew or screamer

[The girl Elizabeth Paton, referred to in Rankine's announcement, had been a servant at Lochlea about the period of the Poet's father's death, in Feb., 1784. Thereafter, when the Burnes family removed to Mossgiel, the girl went to her own home at Largieside, in Rankine's neighborhood. In the natural course of events, the poet had soon occasion to write his famous "Epistle" to the same correspondent, on the subject of the preceding verses. That production accordingly now follows as a proper sequel.]

EPISTLE TO JOHN RANKINE, FARMER, ADAMHILL,

ENCLOSING SOME POEMS.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

O ROUGH, rude, ready-witted Rankine,
The *wale o' cocks* for fun an' drinking! choice of good fellows
There's mony godly folks are thinking,
Your dreams ‡ and tricks
Will send you Korah-like a-sinkin,
Straught to auld Nick's. straight

* James ii. 10.
† The girl is pregnant.
‡ A certain humorous dream of his was then making a noise in the country side.—*R. B.*

Ye hae sae mony cracks an' cants, *
And in your wicked, *drucken rants*, drunken frolics
Ye mak a devil o' the *saunts*, saints
An' fill them *fou;* full
And then their failings, flaws, an' wants,
Are a' seen thro'.

Hypocrisy, in mercy spare it!
That holy robe, O *dinna* tear it! do not
Spare't for their sakes, wha aften wear it—
The lads in black;
But your curst wit, when it comes near it,
Rives't aff their back. tears it from

Think, wicked Sinner, wha ye're *skaithing*: harming
It's just the 'Blue-gown' badge an' claithing †
O' *saunts;* tak that, ye *lea'e* them naething saints leave
To *ken* them by, know
Frae ony unregenerate heathen, from
Like you or I.

I've sent you here some rhymin ware,
A' that I bargained for, an' *mair*; all more
Sae, when ye hae an hour to spare, so
I will expect,
Yon sang ‡ ye'll sen't, wi' *cannie* care, quiet
And *no* neglect. not

Tho' faith, sma' heart *hae* I to sing! have
My muse *dow* scarcely spread her wing; can

---

* You have so many stories and merry tales.—J. H.

† "Blue gowns" were an order of licensed beggars in Scotland, wearing a badge and a blue cloak or gown. They were called the king's bedesmen. The practice of appointing "blue gowns" was discontinued in 1833, and the last survivor died in 1863. The Scotch clergy wear black gowns as their "claithing."—J. H.

‡ A song he had promised the author.—R. B.

I've play'd mysel a *bonie spring*, fine tune
An' danc'd my fill! *
I'd better gaen an' *sair't* the king, served
At Bunker's Hill.

'Twas ae night lately, in my fun,
I gaed a rovin wi' the gun, †
An' brought a *paitrick* to the *grun'*— partridge ground
A bonie hen;
And, as the twilight was begun,
Thought *nane wad ken.* none would know

The poor, wee thing was little hurt;
I *straiket* it a *wee* for sport, stroked little
Ne'er thinkin they wad *fash* me for't; trouble
But, Deil-ma-care!
Somebody tells the *poacher-court*, kirk-session
The *hale* affair. whole

Some *auld*, *us'd* hands had ta'en a note, old experienced
That *sic* a hen had got a shot; such
I was suspected *for* the plot; of
I scorn'd to lee;
So gat the whissle o' my groat, ‡
An' pay't the fee.

But, by my gun, o' guns the *wale*, choice
An' by my *pouther an' my hail*, powder and shot
An' by my hen, an' by her tail,
I vow an' swear!
The game shall pay, owre moor an' dale,
For this, *niest* year. next

---

* I have got myself into a nice mess.—J. H.

† A sporting simile for unlicensed courting.

‡ Was mulcted in or ordered to pay the penalty. Before the introduction of poor laws into Scotland, fornicators were fined by the kirk-session, the money going for behoof of the poor. In very early times the fine was a groat or 4*d.* sterling, whence the word came to be synonymous with fine. Later the fine was a guinea, or higher according to the circumstances of the culprit.—J. H.

As soon's the *clockin-time* is by, hatching-time
An' the *wee pouts* began to cry, pullets
L—d, I'se hae sportin by an' by,
For my *gowd* guinea; gold
Tho' I should herd the buckskin *kye* cows
For't, in Virginia!*

Trowth, they had *muckle* for to blame! In truth much
'Twas neither broken wing nor limb,
But twa-three draps about the *wame*, flank
Scarce thro' the feathers;
An' baith a "yellow George"† to claim
An' *thole* their *blethers!* bear abuse

It *pits* me *ay* as mad's a hare; puts always
So I can rhyme nor write nae mair;
But pennyworths again is fair,
When time's expedient:‡
Meanwhile I am, respected Sir,
Your most obedient.

[It would be interesting indeed to know what were the "poems" which the bard transmitted to Rankine along with this epistle, and even to learn what particular song he had craved from his jolly correspondent. Adamhill is in Craigie parish, although lying within two miles west of Lochlea, which was a much inferior farm. The special trick referred to in the second stanza was that of filling a sanctimonious professor miserably drunk, by entertaining him to a jorum of toddy at the farmhouse. The hot-water kettle had, by pre-arrangement, been primed with proof-whisky, so that the more water Rankine's guest added to his toddy for the purpose of diluting it, the more potent the liquor became.

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*It was the custom to transport convicts to the "plantations" in Virginia. We have here, probably, the origin of the "poor whites" of that State.—J. H.

†A gold guinea, so-called from bearing the impress of one of the Georges, kings of England.—J. H.

‡The poet here intimates that he means to "get even" with the Session by taking value for his guinea so soon as opportunity offers.—J. H.

Less reprehensible instances of his waggery were his "humorous dreams," which the ready-witted farmer of Adamhill had conveniently at hand to relate whenever he desired to help the progress of his argument, or to administer a rebuke.]

[A SEQUEL TO THE TWO FOREGOING.]

A POET'S WELCOME TO HIS LOVE-BEGOTTEN DAUGHTER,

THE FIRST INSTANCE THAT ENTITLED HIM TO THE VENERABLE APPELLATION OF FATHER.

(STEWART, 1799, COMPARED WITH GLENRIDDELL MSS., 1874).

THOU'S welcome, wean; *mishanter fa'* me, ill-luck befall
If thoughts o' thee, or *yet* thy mamie, of
Shall ever *daunton* me or awe me, daunt
My bonie lady,
Or if I blush when thou shalt *ca'* me call
Tyta or daddie.

Tho' now they ca' me fornicator,
An' tease my name in *kintry clatter*, country gossip
The *mair* they talk, I'm *kent* the better, more known
E'en let them *clash;* talk
An auld wife's tongue's a *feckless* matter weak
To gie ane *fash.* trouble

Welcome! my bonie, sweet, wee *dochter*, daughter
Tho' ye come here a *wee* unsought for, little bit
And tho' your comin' I hae fought for,
Baith kirk and *queir;** choir
Yet, by my faith, *ye're no* unwrought for, you were not
That I shall swear!

---

* A name for the kirk-session (before which fornicators appeared), from its often holding its meetings in the choir.—J. H.

Wee image o' my bonie Betty,
As fatherly I kiss and *daut* thee, fondle
As dear, and near my heart I set thee,
Wi' as gude will
As *a'* the priests had seen me get thee all
That's out o' h—ll.

Sweet fruit o' *mony* a merry dint, many
My funny toil is now a' *tint*, lost
Sin' thou cam to the warl' *asklent*, illegitimately
Which fools may scoff at;
In my last *plack* thy part's be in't coin
The better ha'f o't.

Tho' I should be the *waur bestead*, worse off for it
Thou's be as *braw and bienly* clad, finely and comfortably
And thy young years as nicely bred
Wi' education,
As ony brat o' wedlock's bed,
In a' thy station.

Lord grant that thou may ay inherit
Thy mither's person, grace, an' merit,
An' thy poor, worthless daddy's spirit,
Without his failins,
'Twill please me mair to see thee heir it,
Than *stocket mailens*. well-stocked farms

For if thou be what I wad *hae* thee, have
And tak the counsel I shall *gie* thee, give
I'll never rue my trouble wi' thee—
The cost nor shame o't,
But be a loving father to thee,
And *brag* the name o't. boast

[The heading to the above poem is that in the Glenriddell volume preserved in Liverpool; but the copy entered there in Burns' autograph differs considerably from that first given to the world by Stewart. The verses are differently arranged, and the poem contains two hitherto unpublished stanzas, besides an entire remodelling of the verse which is last in the Glenriddell copy, and the fifth in Stewart. By some inadvertency, as we suppose, Burns, in transcribing the poem, had omitted Stewart's closing verse (the seventh in our text), which is so fine that it cannot be dispensed with. Through the kindness of Dr. Carruthers, of Inverness, we have been supplied with a copy of this poem which Burns presented to the aged Wm. Tytler, Esq., of Woodhouselee. It corresponds almost entirely with the Glenriddell version, and contains the stanza wanting there. That and other Burns' MSS., to be hereafter noticed, are in the possession of Mr. Tytler's great-grandson, Colonel Fraser-Tytler, of Aldourie.

The child—born in Nov., 1784—was tenderly reared and educated at Mossgiel under the care of the poet's mother and sisters. When "Betty Burns" arrived at the age of twenty-one years, she received £200 as a marriage-portion out of a fund that had been subscribed for the widow and children of the bard. She bore a striking resemblance to her father, and became the wife of Mr. John Bishop, overseer at Polkemmet, Linlithgowshire, and died in December, 1816, at the age of thirty-two. We have heard nothing of her offspring or her descendants.

The third and sixth stanzas are those that were brought to light in 1874 from the Glenriddell MSS.

The public is now in possession of the complete poem, with the author's last touches.]

SONG—O LEAVE NOVELS.

(CURRIE, 1801.)

O LEAVE novels,* ye Mauchline belles,
  Ye're safer at your spinning-wheel;
Such witching books are baited hooks
  For rakish rooks like Rob Mossgiel;

---

* The Ayrshire pronunciation of *novel* is (or was) *no-vel'*, being, as is the case with many Scotch words, closer to the sound of the French original than the English pronunciation is.—J. H.

Your fine Tom Jones and Grandisons,
  They make your youthful fancies reel;
They heat your brains, and fire your veins,
  And then you're prey for Rob Mossgiel.

Beware a tongue that's smoothly hung,
  A heart that warmly seems to feel;
That feeling heart but acts a part—
  'Tis rakish art in Rob Mossgiel.
The frank address, the soft caress,
  Are worse than poisoned darts of steel;
The frank address, and politesse,
  Are all finesse in Rob Mossgiel.

[This song contains excellent advice to the young women of Mauchline. It would have been well for at least one of those "belles" had she acted on the poet's candid warning; but, according to the philosophy of a reverend biographer of Burns, whose observations are commended by Lockhart—"To warn the young and unsuspecting of their danger, is only to stimulate their curiosity." The warning, in that case, were better withheld.]

FRAGMENT—THE MAUCHLINE LADY.

(Cromek, 1808.)

When first I came to Stewart Kyle,
  My mind it was *na* steady; not
Where'er I *gaed*, where'er I *rade*, went rode
  A mistress still I had ay:

But when I came roun' by Mauchline toun,
  Not dreadin anybody,
My heart was caught, before I thought,
  And by a Mauchline lady.

[If the *Epistle to Davie* was composed in January, 1785, then it follows that the poet's first rencontre with Jean Armour was in the summer of 1784. The present fragment, in that case, must apply

to her. It is a free parody of the old song, "I had a horse and I had nae mair," to which tune the author directs it to be set.

"Stewart Kyle," or Kyle-Stewart, is that part of the central district of Ayrshire which lies between the rivers Irvine and Ayr. The poet was originally of "King Kyle," or Kyle-Carrick—the district between the Ayr and the Doon. He shifted to Stewart Kyle on leaving Mount Oliphant for Lochlea, in 1777.]

FRAGMENT—MY GIRL SHE'S AIRY.

Tune—"Black Jock."

(ORIG. COMMON-PLACE BOOK, 1872.)

[See Introduction to Common-place Book.]

My girl she's airy, she's buxom and gay;
Her breath is as sweet as the blossoms in May;
  A touch of her lips it ravishes quite:
She's always good natur'd, good humor'd, and free;
She dances, she glances, she smiles upon me;
  I never am happy when out of her sight.

Her slender neck, her handsome waist,
Her hair well curled, her stays well lac'd,
Her taper white leg with . . .
For her . . . . . .
  And O for the joys of a long winter night.

[The above fragment of a song the poet records in his Common-place Book, under date September, 1784. The editor of the printed copy of that curious MS. has noted that in the original there is some "defect," where the blanks are filled up with asterisks. Had the fragment been recorded a year later, we might safely assume that Jean Armour was the "airy girl" here sketched out.]

THE BELLES OF MAUCHLINE.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

In Mauchline there dwells six proper young belles,
  The pride of the place and its neighborhood a';
Their carriage and dress, a stranger would guess,
  In London or Paris, they'd gotten it a'.

Miss Miller is fine, Miss Markland's divine,
  Miss Smith she has wit, and Miss Betty is *braw*: { gaily dressed
There's beauty and fortune to get wi' Miss Morton,
  But Armour's the jewel for me o' them a'.

[For the sake of the interest involved in whatever interested Burns, the after-history of the "six proper young belles," catalogued by him in this little piece, has been traced and is here recorded. Miss Helen Miller married Burns' friend, Dr. Mackenzie. The "divine" Miss Markland was married to Mr. James Findlay, an officer of excise, first at Tarbolton, afterwards at Greenock. The witty Miss Jean Smith bestowed herself upon Mr. James Candlish, who, like Findlay, was a friend of Burns. The "braw" Miss Betty Miller became Mrs. Templeton; she was sister of No. 1, and died early in life. Miss Morton gave her "beauty and fortune" to Mr. Paterson, a merchant in Mauchline. Of Armour's history, Immortality has taken charge. The last survivor died in January, 1854; she was mother of the late Rev. Dr. Candlish, of Edinburgh, an eminent minister in the Free Church of Scotland, and latterly Principal of the Free Church College, Edinburgh, who was laid beside his parents in Old Calton, at Edinburgh, in October, 1873.]

EPITAPH ON A NOISY POLEMIC.

(Kilmarnock Ed., 1786.)

Below *thir* stanes lie Jamie's banes; these
  O Death, it's my opinion,
Thou ne'er took such a *bleth'rin* b-tch blathering
  Into thy dark dominion!

[The subject of this versicle was James Humphrey, a jobbing mason, well-known in Mauchline and Tarbolton for his tendency to talk on matters of church doctrine. He used to hint that the poet had satirized him in revenge for being beaten by Humphrey in an argument. He died in 1844 at the advanced age of 86, an inmate of Faile poor's-house; and many an alms-offering he earned in consequence of Burns' epitaph.]

(He used to introduce himself to visitors, from whom he hoped to get a trifle, with: "Please, sir, I'm 'the bleth'rin bitch.'"—J. H.)

EPITAPH ON A HENPECKED SQUIRE.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

As father Adam first was fool'd,
(A case that's still too common,)
Here lies a man a woman ruled
The devil ruled the woman.

EPIGRAM ON THE SAID OCCASION.

O DEATH, had'st thou but spar'd his life,
Whom we this day lament!
We freely *wad* exchanged the wife, would have
And *a'* been weel content. all
Ev'n as he is, *cauld* in his *graff*, cold grave
The *swap* we yet will do't; exchange
Tak thou the carlin's carcass *aff*, off
Thou'se get the *saul o' boot.* You will soul to boot

ANOTHER.

ONE Queen Artemisa, as old stories tell,
When deprived of her husband she lovèd so well,
In respect for the love and affection he show'd her,
She reduced him to dust and she drank up the powder.
But Queen Netherplace, of a diff'rent complexion,
When called on to order the fun'ral direction,
Would have eat her dead lord, on a slender pretence,
Not to show her respect, but—to save the expence!

[The three foregoing epigrams were directed against Mr. Campbell, of Netherplace, and his wife, whose house and grounds the poet daily passed on his way between Mossgiel and Mauchline. After publication in his first edition they were withdrawn.]

ON TAM THE CHAPMAN.

(ALDINE ED., 1839.)

As Tam the chapman on a day,
Wi' Death *forgather'd* by the way, met accidentally
Weel pleas'd, he greets a wight so famous,
And Death was *na* less pleas'd wi' Thomas, no
Wha cheerfully lays down his pack,
And there *blaws up* a hearty *crack:* begins chat
His social, friendly, honest heart
Sae tickled Death, they could *na* part; so not
Sae, after viewing knives and garters,
Death taks him hame to *gie* him quarters. give

[This was first brought to life by William Cobbett, who printed it in his Magazine. It had been communicated to him by the subject of the epitaph, by name Thomas Kennedy, then an aged person resident in London. He represented himself as having known the poet in very early life, in the neighborhood of Ayr, where both were born and brought up. Kennedy afterwards became a travelling agent for a mercantile house in a country town near Mauchline, where he renewed acquaintance with Burns. These lines were composed on Kennedy's recovery from a severe illness.

This trifle may have suggested to Burns the idea afterwards worked out in "Death and Dr. Hornbook."]

EPITAPH ON JOHN RANKINE.

(STEWART, 1801.)

AE day, as Death, that *gruesome carl*, grim fellow
Was driving to the *tither* warl' the other
A *mixtie-maxtie* motley squad, much mixed
And mony a guilt-bespotted lad—
Black gowns of each denomination,
And thieves of every rank and station,

From him that wears the star and garter,
To him that *wintles* in a halter: wriggles
Ashamed himself to see the wretches,
He mutters, *glowrin* at the bitches, staring
"By G—d I'll not be seen behint them,
Nor 'mang the sp'ritual *core* present them, corps or company
Without, at least, *ae* honest man, one
To grace this d——d infernal clan!"
By Adamhill* a glance he threw,
"L—d God!" quoth he, "I have it now;
There's just the man I want, i' faith!"
And quickly stoppit Rankine's breath.

[This is another in the same vein as the preceding. Cromek has observed that the first idea of the lines seems to have been suggested by Falstaff's account of his ragged recruits:—"I'll not march through Coventry with them, that's flat!" The piece would be as much to Rankine's taste as a similar compliment, some few years thereafter, was relished by Capt. Grose.]

LINES ON THE AUTHOR'S DEATH,

WRITTEN WITH THE SUPPOSED VIEW OF BEING HANDED TO RANKINE AFTER THE POET'S INTERMENT.

(STEWART, 1801.)

HE who of Rankine sang, lies stiff and dead,
And a green grassy hillock hides his head;
Alas! alas! a devilish change indeed.

[These lines must be regarded as a counterpart to the poet's elegy on himself, composed shortly afterwards, beginning,—

"Now Robin lies in his last lair,
He'll gabble rhyme and sing nae mair."]

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* The residence of his friend, John Rankine, to whom he addresses a famous "Epistle."—See p. 55.—J. H.

MAN WAS MADE TO MOURN: A DIRGE.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

WHEN chill November's surly blast
  Made fields and forests bare,
One ev'ning, as I wander'd forth
  Along the banks of Ayr,
I spied a man, whose aged step
  Seem'd weary, worn with care;
His face was furrow'd o'er with years,
  And hoary was his hair.

"Young stranger, whither wand'rest thou?"
  Began the rev'rend sage;
"Does thirst of wealth thy step constrain,
  Or youthful pleasure's rage?
Or haply, prest with cares and woes,
  Too soon thou hast began
To wander forth, with me to mourn
  The miseries of man.

"The sun that overhangs yon moors,
  Out-spreading far and wide,
Where hundreds labor to support
  A haughty lordling's pride;—
I've seen yon weary winter-sun
  Twice forty times return;
And ev'ry time has added proofs,
  That man was made to mourn.

"O man! while in thy early years,
  How prodigal of time!
Mis-spending all thy precious hours—
  Thy glorious, youthful prime!

Alternate follies take the sway;
  Licentious passions burn;
Which tenfold force gives Nature's law,
  That man was made to mourn.

"Look not alone on youthful prime,
  Or manhood's active might;
Man then is useful to his kind,
  Supported is his right:
But see him on the edge of life,
  With cares and sorrows worn;
Then Age and Want—oh! ill-match'd pair—
  Shew man was made to mourn.

"A few seem favorites of fate,
  In pleasure's lap carest;
Yet think not all the rich and great
  Are likewise truly blest:
But oh! what crowds in ev'ry land,
  All wretched and forlorn,
Thro' weary life this lesson learn,
  That man was made to mourn!

"Many and sharp the num'rous ills
  Inwoven with our frame!
More pointed still we make ourselves,
  Regret, remorse, and shame;
And man, whose heav'n-erected face
  The smiles of love adorn,—
Man's inhumanity to man
  Makes countless thousands mourn!

"See yonder poor, o'erlabor'd wight,
  So abject, mean, and vile,
Who begs a brother of the earth
  To give him leave to toil;

And see his lordly fellow-worm
The poor petition spurn,
Unmindful, tho' a weeping wife
And helpless offspring mourn.

"If I'm design'd yon lordling's slave—
By Nature's law design'd—
Why was an independent wish
E'er planted in my mind?
If not, why am I subject to
His cruelty or scorn?
Or why has man the will and pow'r
To make his fellow mourn?

"Yet, let not this too much, my son,
Disturb thy youthful breast:
This partial view of human-kind
Is surely not the last!
The poor, oppressèd, honest man
Had never, sure, been born,
Had there not been some recompense
To comfort those that mourn!

"O Death! the poor man's dearest friend,
The kindest and the best!
Welcome the hour my aged limbs
Are laid with thee at rest!
The great, the wealthy fear thy blow,
From pomp and pleasure torn;
But, oh! a blest relief for those
That weary-laden mourn!"

[This solemn composition has "chill November" in its introductory line, but the author's record of it in the Common-place Book is dated "August." That document comes to a sudden close in October, 1785, so that we are forced to regard this as a composition of November, 1784. He there styles it "A Song," to

the tune of "Peggy Bawn." The present generation knows somewhat of a modern song and tune called "Molly Bawn," but few alive ever heard of the air thus referred to, whose querulous notes lent their impulse to the mind of Burns, while he composed those stanzas. A lovely spot called "Haugh," a mile or more below Mauchline, near where the *Lugar* flows into the river Ayr, is pointed out as the locality indicated by the poet in his opening verse. In one of his letters to Mrs. Dunlop, Burns writes:—"I had an old grand-uncle with whom my mother lived in her girlish years; the good old man was long blind ere he died, during which time his highest enjoyment was to sit down and cry, while my mother would sing the simple old song, 'The Life and Age of Man.'" In Southey's *Doctor* we find him thus referring to the present poem, and its connection with the above pathetic incident:—"It is certain that this old song was in Burns' mind when he composed to the same cadence those well-known stanzas of which the burthen is 'Man was made to mourn.' But the old blind man's tears were tears of piety, not of regret; while he thus listened and wept, his heart was not so much in the past as his hopes were in the future. Burns must have been conscious in his better hours (and he had many such) that he inherited the feeling—if not the sober piety—which is so touchingly exemplified in this family anecdote."]

THE TWA *HERDS;* OR, THE HOLY *TULYIE.*

pastors quarrel

AN UNCO MOURNFU' TALE. a very

(STEWART AND MEIKLE'S TRACTS, 1799.)

"Blockheads with reason, wicked wits abhor,
But fool with fool is barbarous civil war."—POPE.

O a' ye pious godly flocks,
Weel fed on pastures orthodox,
Wha now will keep you *frae* the fox, from
Or worrying *tykes?* dogs
Or wha will *tent* the *waifs* an' *crocks*, guard stragglers / old ewes
About the *dykes?* fences

The twa best herds in a' the *wast*, west (Ayrshire)
That e'er *ga'e* gospel horn a blast gave

These five an' twenty simmers past—
Oh, *dool* to tell! sorrow
Hae had a bitter black *out-cast* quarrel
Atween themsel. between

O, Moodie, man, an' *wordy* Russell, worthy
How could you raise so vile a bustle;
Ye'll see how "new-light" herds * will whistle,
An' think it fine!
The L—'s cause ne'er gat sic a twistle,
Sin' I *hae min'*. remember

O, sirs! whae'er wad hae expeckit
Your duty ye wad sae negleckit,
Ye wha were ne'er by lairds respeckit
To wear the plaid;
But by the brutes themselves eleckit,
To be their guide.†

What flock wi' Moodie's flock could rank,
Sae hale and hearty every shank,
Nae poison'd *soor* Arminian *stank* sour pool
He let them taste;
Frae Calvin's well, ay clear they drank,—
O, sic a feast!

The thummart, willcat, brock, an' tod‡
Weel kend his voice thro' a' the wood, well knew
He smell'd their *ilka* hole an' road, each and every
Baith out and in; both
An' weel he lik'd to shed their bluid,
An' sell their skin.

---

* The new-light herds "were the moderate," *i. e.* less or more Arminian or rationalistic section of the clergy of the Scottish church; the "auld light" constituted the Evangelical or strongly Calvinistic party. The distinction continues yet under the names Moderate and Evangelical.—J. H.

† Were not appointed by patrons, but chosen by the flock.—J, H.

‡ Polecat, wildcat, badger and fox. Thummart is a corruption of foumart or fou'-martin, so called from its smell.—J. H.

What herd like Russell tell'd his tale;
His voice was heard thro' muir and dale,*
He kenn'd the L—'s sheep, *ilka* tail, every
Owre a' the height;
An' saw *gin* they were sick or hale, whether
At the first sight.

He *fine* a mangy sheep could scrub, well
Or nobly *fling* the gospel club, swing
And "new-light" herds could nicely drub,
Or pay their skin;
Could shake them o'er the burning *dub*, hole
Or heave them in.

Sic twa—O! do I live to see't, Such two
Sic famous twa should disagree't,
And names, like "villain," "hypocrite,"
Ilk ither gi'en, Each other given
While "new-light" herds, wi' laughin spite,
Say *neither's lien!* neither lies

A' ye wha *tent* the gospel *fauld*, guard fold
There's Duncan† deep, an' Peebles‡ *shaul'*, shallow
But chiefly thou, apostle Auld,§
We trust in thee,
That thou wilt work them, hot an' *cauld*, cold
Till they agree.

Consider, sirs, how we're beset;
There's scarce a new herd that we get,
But comes *frae* 'mang that cursed set from
I *winna* name; will not
I hope frae heav'n to see them yet
In fiery flame.

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* Russell's voice could be heard a mile off.
† Rev. Dr. Duncan, of Dundonald.
‡ Rev. Wm. Peebles, Newton-on-Ayr.
§ Rev. Wm. Auld, of Mauchline.

Dalrymple* has been lang our *fae*, foe
M'Gill† has wrought us *meikle wae*, much woe
An' that curs'd rascal *ca'd* M'Quhae,‡ named
An' *baith* the Shaws,§ both
That *aft* hae made us black an' *blae*, often blue
Wi' vengefu' paws.

Auld Wodrow‖ lang has hatch'd mischief;
We thought ay death wad bring relief,
But he has gotten, to our grief,
Ane to succeed him,**
A chield wha'll soundly *buff our beef;* drub us
I *meikle* dread him. much

And mony a ane that I could tell,
Wha fain would openly rebel,
Forby turn-coats amang oursel, besides
There's Smith†† for *ane;* one
I doubt he's but a grey *nick quill*, soft goose quill
An' that *ye'll fin'*. you will find

O! a' ye flocks o'er a' the hills,
By mosses, meadows, moors, an' *fells*, uplands
Come, join your counsel and your skills
To *cowe* the lairds, humble
An' get the brutes the power themsels
To chuse their herds.

Then Orthodoxy yet may prance,
An' Learning in a *woody* dance, gibbet-halter

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*Rev. Dr. Dalrymple, of Ayr. He baptized Burns.
†Rev. Dr. M'Gill, colleague of Dr. Dalrymple.
‡Minister of St. Quivox.
§Dr. Andrew Shaw, of Craigie, and Dr. David Shaw, of Coylton.
‖Dr. Peter Woodrow, of Tarbolton.
**Rev. John M'Math, a young assistant and successor to Woodrow.
††Rev. George Smith, of Galston, here and in "The Holy Fair" claimed as friendly to the "new-light" party; but cried down in "The Kirk's Alarm."

An' that *fell* cur ca'd "common-sense," * keen
That bites *sae sair*, so sore
Be banish'd o'er the sea to France:
Let him bark there.†

Then Shaw's an' D'rymple's eloquence,
M'Gill's close nervous excellence,
M'Quhae's pathetic manly sense,
An' guid M'Math,
Wi' Smith, *wha* thro' the heart can glance,‡ who
May a' pack *aff*. off

[The author, in alluding to this poem in his autobiography, gives it no title such as that by which it is now distinguished. He calls it "a burlesque lamentation on a quarrel between two reverend Calvinists," and tells us that it was the first of his poetic offspring that saw the light. He does not mean the "light of print," but of circulation in manuscript. In our heading we give three titles, taken respectively from various printed copies; for we are not aware that any holograph copy exists except the one in the British Museum, which calls it "The Holy Tulyie."

In regard to its date, we suspect that Chambers, in placing it under April, 1785, has no authority beyond a fancied connection between this poem and the epistle to Wm. Simson, of May 1785. The reader has been already prepared, by the author's outburst against clerical hypocrisy in the Epistle to Rankine, to find him writing shortly thereafter in the same vein. Lockhart tells us—as from personal knowledge—that Burns personally witnessed in open court the unseemly contention between the "twa herds,"—to wit, the Rev. John Russell of Kilmarnock, and the Rev. Alex. Moodie, of Riccarton. If so, the ecclesiastical court records may throw light upon the date. Meanwhile, we assume that the affair happened prior to the close of 1784.]

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* "Common-sense" was, and is, claimed as the attribute of the "new-light" or rationalistic party.

† The poem ends here in the MS.

‡ In the Tract, 1799, this line reads,—"Wha through the heart can brawly glance," and thus the compliment to Smith is dispensed with, and turned in favor of M'Math.

EPISTLE TO DAVIE, A BROTHER POET.

JANUARY.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

WHILE winds *frae* off Ben-Lomond blaw, — from
An' bar the doors wi' drivin' snaw,
An' *hing us owre the ingle*, — make us crouch over the fire
I set me down to pass the time,
An' spin a verse or twa o' rhyme,
In hamely, *westlin* jingle: — west country
While frosty winds blaw in the drift,
Ben to the *chimla lug*, — into chimney corner
I grudge a *wee* the great-folk's gift, — little
That live *sae bien* an' snug: — so comfortably
I *tent* less, and want less — care
Their roomy fire-side;
But *hanker, and canker*, — envy and grudge
To see their cursed pride.

It's hardly in a body's pow'r,
To keep, at times, frae being sour,
To see how things are *shar'd;* — distributed
How best a' *chiels* are *whyles* in want, — good fellows sometimes
While *coofs* on countless thousands — blockheads
rant, — rampage
And *ken na* how to *ware't;* — know not spend it
But Davie, lad, ne'er *fash* your head, — trouble
Tho' we hae little *gear;* — wealth
We're fit to win our daily bread,
As lang's we're *hale and fier:* — whole and sound
"*Mair spier na*, nor fear na,"* — more ask not
Auld age ne'er mind a *feg;* — fig

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*Ramsay.—*R. B.*

The last o't, the *warst o't*, worst of it
Is only but to beg.*

To lye in kilns and barns at e'en,
When *banes* are craz'd, and *bluid* is thin, bones blood
Is, doubtless, great distress!
Yet then content could make us blest;
Ev'n then, sometimes, we'd snatch a taste
Of truest happiness.
The honest heart that's free *frae a'* from all
Intended fraud or guile,
However Fortune kick the *ba'*, ball
Has ay some cause to smile;
An' mind still, you'll find still,
A comfort this nae *sma'*; small
Nae mair then, we'll care then,
Nae farther we can fa'. we cannot fall lower

What tho', like commoners of air,
We wander out, we know not where,
But either house or hal', without
Yet nature's charms, the hills and woods,
The sweeping vales, an' foaming floods,
Are free alike to all.
In days when daisies deck the ground,
And blackbirds whistle clear,
With honest joy our hearts will bound,
To see the coming year:
On *braes* when we please then, heights
We'll sit an' *sowth* a tune; whistle softly
Syne rhyme *till't*, we'll time till't, afterwards to it
An' sing't when we hae done.

* In Burns' time there were no poor-laws in Scotland, and the only resource that old or disabled destitute persons had was beggary. As poor people in general did not know but that they might come to this themselves, beggars were much more considerately and familiarly treated than they are now. They were regarded simply as beaten in the struggle with the world, not as disgraced.—J. H.

It's no in titles nor in rank;
It's no in wealth like Lon'on bank,
  To purchase peace and rest:
It's no in makin *muckle, mair;* — much into more
It's no in books, it's no in *lear,* — learning
  To make us truly blest:
If happiness hae not her seat
  An' centre in the breast,
We may be wise, or rich, or great,
  But never can be blest;
    Nae treasures nor pleasures
      Could make us happy lang;
    The heart ay's the part ay
      That makes us right or wrang.

Think ye, that *sic* as you and I, — such
Wha drudge an' drive thro' wet and dry,
  Wi' never ceasing toil;
Think ye, are we less blest than they,
Wha scarcely *tent* us in their way, — notice
  As hardly worth their while?
Alas! how oft in haughty mood,
  God's creatures they oppress!
Or else, neglecting a' that's good,
  They riot in excess!
    Baith careless and fearless
      Of either heaven or hell;
    Esteeming, and deeming
      It *a'* an idle tale! — all

Then let us cheerfu' acquiesce,
Nor make our scanty pleasures less,
  By pining at our state:
And, even should misfortunes come,
I, here wha sit, *hae* met wi' some— — have
  An's thankfu' for them yet, — and am

They *gie* the wit of age to youth; give
They let us *ken oursel;* know ourselves
They make us see the naked truth—
The real *guid* and ill: good
Tho' losses an' crosses
Be lessons right severe,
There's wit there, ye'll get there,
Ye'll find nae other where.

But *tent me*, Davie, ace o' hearts! attend to me
(To say aught less wad wrang the *cartes*, cards
And flatt'ry I detest)
This life has joys for you and I;
An' joys that riches ne'er could buy,
An' joys the very best.
There's a' the pleasures o' the heart,
The lover an' the frien';
Ye hae your Meg, your dearest part,
And I my darling Jean!
It warms me, it charms me,
To mention but her name:
It heats me, it *beets* me, enkindles
An' sets me a' on flame!

O all ye Pow'rs who rule above!
O Thou whose very self art love!
Thou know'st my words sincere!
The life-blood streaming thro' my heart,
Or my more dear immortal part,
Is not more fondly dear!
When heart-corroding care and grief
Deprive my soul of rest,
Her dear idea brings relief,
And solace to my breast.
Thou Being, All-seeing,
O hear my fervent pray'r;
Still take her, and make her
Thy most peculiar care!

All hail; ye tender feelings dear!
The smile of love, the friendly tear,
  The sympathetic glow!
Long since, this world's thorny ways
Had number'd out my weary days,
  Had it not been for you!
Fate still has blest me with a friend,
  In ev'ry care and ill;
And oft a more endearing band—
  A tie more tender still.
    It lightens, it brightens
      The tenebrific scene,
    To meet with, an' greet with
      My Davie, or my Jean!

O how that Name inspires my style!
The words come *skelpin*, rank an' file, hurrying on
  Amaist before I *ken!* almost know
The ready measure rins as fine,
As Phœbus an' the famous Nine
  Were *glowrin* owre my pen. staring
My *spavet* Pegasus will limp, spavined
  Till ance he's fairly *het;* hot
And then he'll *hilch*, and *stilt*, an' *jimp*, hobble halt jump
  And *rin an unco fit*; run uncommon fast
    But least then the beast then
      Should rue this hasty ride,
    I'll light now, and *dight* now wipe down
      His sweaty, *wizen'd* hide. shrunken

[The date of this poem is January, 1785, and it is headed by Burns "An Epistle to Davie, a Brother Poet, Lover, Ploughman and Fiddler." This Davie was David Sillar, one year younger than Burns, and also the son of a small farmer near Tarbolton. He removed to Irvine before the poet published his first edition. Smitten with the spirit of emulation, he also printed a volume of rhyming ware, which appeared in 1789, and Burns, then at Ellisland, helped him to his utmost in procuring subscribers. "Davie" did not make a fortune by the sale of his book; but

he applied himself earnestly to business, first as a grocer, and thereafter as a schoolmaster. Eventually he became a councillor, and latterly a magistrate, of Irvine, and survived till 1830, much respected, and possessed of considerable means.

The poem exhibits Burns in the full blossom of attachment to his Jean. It was not the fate of Sillar to obtain the hand of his "Meg" referred to in the Epistle: she was *Margaret Orr*, a servant at Stair House.]

HOLY WILLIE'S PRAYER.

"And send the godly in a pet to pray."—POPE.

(STEWART AND MEIKLE'S TRACTS, 1799.)

ARGUMENT.—Holy Willie was a rather oldish bachelor elder, in the parish of Mauchline, and much and justly famed for that polemical chattering which ends in tippling orthodoxy, and for that spiritualized bawdry which refines to liquorish devotion. In a sessional process with a gentleman in Mauchline—a Mr. Gavin Hamilton—*Holy Willie* and his priest, Father Auld, after full hearing in the presbytery of Ayr, came off but second best, owing partly to the oratorical powers of Mr. Robert Aiken, Mr. Hamilton's counsel; but chiefly to Mr. Hamilton's being one of the most irreproachable and truly respectable characters in the county. On losing his process, the muse overheard him [Holy Willie] at his devotions, as follows:—

O THOU, who in the heavens does dwell,
Who, as it pleases best Thysel,
Sends ane to heaven an' ten to hell,
A' for Thy glory,
And no for *ony* gude or ill — any
They've done *afore Thee!** — in thy sight

* It is amusing and instructive to note how differently the respective biographers of the poet have expressed their sentiments regarding this powerful production. The Rev. Hamilton Paul and the Rev. Hately Waddell seem to invite the friends of religion to bless the memory of the poet who took such a judicious method of "leading the liberal mind to a rational view of the nature of

I bless and praise Thy matchless might,
When thousands Thou hast left in night,
That I am here *afore* Thy sight, before
For gifts an' grace
A burning and a shining light
To a' this place.

What was I, or my generation,
That I should get *sic* exaltation, such
I *wha* deserve most just damnation who
For broken laws,
Five thousand years ere my creation,
Thro' Adam's cause.

When *frae* my mither's womb I fell, from
Thou might hae plungèd me in hell,
To gnash my gums, to weep and wail,
In burnin lakes,
Where damnèd devils roar and yell,
Chain'd to their stakes.

Yet I am here a chosen sample,
To show Thy grace is great and ample;

---

prayer." Dr. Waddell says that the poem "implies no irreverence whatever on the writer's part; but on the contrary, manifests his own profoundest detestation of, and contempt for, every variety of imposture in the name of religion." His brother divine regards the poem as "merely a metrical version of every prayer that is offered up by those who call themselves of the pure reformed church of Scotland." Motherwell, on the other hand, styles it "by far the most reprehensible of Burns' pieces, and one which should never have been written." Cunningham timidly shelters himself behind the words of Sir Walter Scott, by calling it a "too daring poem," and "a piece of satire more exquisitely severe than any which Burns ever afterwards wrote." Chambers describes it as "a satire nominally aimed at *Holy Willie*, but in reality a burlesque of the extreme doctrinal views of the party to which that hypocrite belonged." Many will agree with Sir Harris Nicolas in saying that "the reverend admirers of the poem appear to have compounded with their consciences for being pleased with a piece showing little veneration for religion itself, because it ridicules the mistaken zeal of an opposite sect."

(However regarded by Burns' biographers, this is one of the best known and most frequently quoted of his poems.—J. H.)

I'm here a pillar *o'* Thy temple, of
Strong as a rock,
A guide, a buckler, and example,
To *a'* thy flock. all

O L—d, Thou *kens* what zeal I bear, knowest
When drinkers drink, an' swearers swear,
An' singin' there, an' dancin' here,
Wi' great and sma';
For I am keepit by Thy fear
Free *frae* them a'. from

But yet, O L—d! confess I must,
At times I'm *fash'd* wi' fleshly lust: troubled
An' sometimes, too, in *warldly* trust, worldly
Vile self gets in;
But Thou remembers we are dust,
Defil'd wi' sin.

O L—d! *yestreen*, Thou kens, wi' Meg—yester-even
Thy pardon I sincerely beg,
O! may't ne'er be a livin plague
To my dishonor,
An' I'll ne'er lift a lawless leg
Again upon her.

Besides, I farther *maun* allow, must
Wi' Leezie's lass, three times I trow—
But L—d, that Friday I was *fou*, full
When I came near her;
Or else, Thou kens, Thy servant true
Wad never *steer* her. disturb

Maybe Thou lets this fleshly thorn perhaps
Buffet Thy servant e'en and morn,
Lest he *owre* proud and high shou'd turn, too
That he's sae gifted:
If sae, Thy han' maun e'en be borne,
Until Thou lift it.

L—d, bless Thy chosen in this place,
For here Thou hast a chosen race:
But G—d confound their stubborn face,
An' blast their name,
Wha bring Thy elders to disgrace
An' public shame.

L—d, mind *Gaw'n* Hamilton's deserts: Gavin
He drinks, an' swears, an' plays at *carts*, cards
Yet has sae mony takin arts,
Wi' great and sma',
Frae G—d's ain priest the people's hearts
He steals awa.

An' when we chasten'd him therefor,
Thou kens how he bred sic a *splore*, outburst of ridicule
As set the warld in a roar
O' laughing at us;—
Curse Thou his basket and his store,
Kail an' potatoes.

L—d, hear my earnest cry and pray'r,
Against that Presbyt'ry o' Ayr;
Thy strong right hand, L—d, make it bare
Upo' their heads;
L—d visit them, an' dinna spare,
For their misdeeds.

O L—d, my G—d! that glib-tongu'd Aiken,*
My vera heart and flesh are quakin,
To think how we stood sweatin, shakin,
An' p—'d wi' dread,
While he, wi' hingin lip an' *snakin*, sneering exultingly
Held up his head.

*An eloquent Ayr lawyer, who argued his brother practitioner's (Hamilton's) case before the Presbytery SEE ARGUMENT.—J. H.

L—d, in Thy day o' vengeance try him,
L—d, visit them wha did employ him,
And pass not in Thy mercy by them,
Nor hear their pray'r,
But for Thy people's sake destroy them,
An' *dinna* spare. do not

But, L—d, remember me an' mine
Wi' mercies temporal an' divine,
That I for grace an' *gear* may shine, wealth
Excell'd by *nane*, none
And a' The glory shall be thine,
Amen, Amen!

[The "Argument," or introduction, printed at the head of this poem, is from the bard's own pen. It is prefixed to the copy inserted in the Glenriddell volume at Liverpool. This enables us with some certainty to decide that the early part of the year 1785 was the date of the composition. The "sessional process" referred to really commenced in August, 1784, just before the annual celebration of the communion at Mauchline, when the name of Gavin Hamilton, friend and landlord of the poet, was included in a list of members who were threatened to be debarred from the communion table for "habitual neglect of church ordinances." Hamilton, believing that he himself was the party chiefly aimed at, addressed an angry letter to the kirk session, telling them that they had no just grounds of offence against him, and that they must be conscious of proceeding purely on "private pique and ill-nature." Hamilton, finding the kirk session obstinate, and inclined to treat him still more offensively, appealed to the presbytery of Ayr for protection, and in January, 1785, he obtained a decree of that court ordering the erasure of the session minutes complained of. It was at this stage—as we apprehend—that the muse of Burns "overheard *Holy Willie* at his devotions;" but that personage did not content himself with "prayers" merely, for Auld and his confederates refused to obey the presbyterial order, and made appeal to the Synod. The process there did not close till July, 1785, when the affair was compromised by Hamilton's acceptance of a certificate from his kirk session, granting him to be "free from all ground of church censure."

In the complete "Prayer" there are seventeen stanzas, the *sixth* of which is rarely found in the later manuscripts; perhaps

because Burns felt it to be rather a weak verse, and excluded it in transcribing. It is not in Stewart and Meikle's Tracts, 1799, nor in Stewart's volume, 1801; but it appears in his second edition, 1802. It is amusing to notice how the various editors have dealt with the text. The Rev. Hamilton Paul gives it pure and uncastrated, excluding only the *sixth* verse, of the existence of which he might not be aware. Cunningham omits verses *sixth* and *eighth*, and corrupts the *fifteenth*. Motherwell gives all the seventeen verses, but his *fifteenth* stanza is the "Dumfries version," of which we shall presently speak. Chambers omits the *sixth*, *eighth* and *ninth* verses, besides repeating Cunningham's corruption of verse *fifteenth*. The Glenriddell MS. adopts what we have termed the "Dumfries version" of the *fifteenth* stanza. The poet's friends in that county stumbled at the word "snakin," which, in the text, has a meaning the very opposite of the English word *sneaking*. To please them, he altered the structure and effect of the stanza, so that the word objected to has the ordinary meaning of the word "sneaking," but only pronounced as an Irishman might—"*snakin'*." The following is the altered stanza, and the reader may decide for himself whether it or the Ayrshire version is the better one:—

"O L—d, my G—d, that glib-tongued Aiken!
My very heart and flesh are quaking,
To think how I sat sweating, shaking,
And p—ss'd wi' dread,
While Auld, wi' hinging lip, gaed sneaking,
And hid his head!"

The motto from Pope is found only in MS. of this poem made in Dumfries. The same observation applies to the motto prefixed to the *Twa Herds*.]

EPITAPH ON HOLY WILLIE.

(STEWART, 1801.)

HERE Holy Willie's *sair* worn clay — sore
Taks up its last abode;
His *saul* has *ta'en* some other way, — soul taken
I fear, the left-hand road.

Stop! there he is, as sure's a gun,
  Poor, silly body, see him;
Nae wonder he's as black's the *grun*, ground
  Observe wha's standing wi' him.

Your *brunstane* devilship, I see, brimstone
  Has got him there before ye;
But haud your nine-tail cat *a wee*, a little
  Till *ance* you've heard my story. once

Your pity I will not implore,
  For pity ye have nane;
Justice, alas! has *gi'en* him o'er, given
  And mercy's day is *gane*. past

But hear me, Sir, deil as ye are,
  Look something to your credit;
A *coof* like him *wad* stain your name, blockhead / would
  If it were *kent* ye did it. known

[This "Epitaph" is a poor performance, compared with the main poem; and the author would seem to have been sensible of this when he refrained from transcribing it into the Glenriddell volume along with the "Prayer." It was not published till two years after the latter made its first appearance, and we are not aware that it now exists in the poet's autograph. The name of the hero of these biting satires was William Fisher, a leading elder in the parish church of Mauchline. Its kirk session, in 1785, consisted of three active members—Rev. William Auld, Mr. John Sillars, and "Holy Willie." In cases of discipline, the reverend incumbent, as moderator, first expressed his opinion, and foreshadowed judgment: William Fisher would obsequiously second the minister in the words, "I say wi' you, Mr. Auld—what say you, Mr. Sillars?" The latter might either agree or dissent, for it made no difference, he being a hopeless minority in a court like that. Such is the account of "Daddie Auld's" session given by Dr. Waddell, on the authority of local reminiscences gleaned by him in the district.

Burns, in a poem produced in 1789, refers to his ancient foe, William Fisher, in these words:—

"Holy Will, holy Will, there was wit in your skull,
When ye pilfer'd the alms of the poor."

It appears that the sins of the hoary hypocrite rapidly found him out. The date of his death we have not ascertained, but his exit was quite in character; for he died in a ditch by the roadside, into which he had fallen on his way home from a debauch. Father Auld and he repose in Mauchline kirkyard, almost side by side, the inscription on the minister's tablet recording that he died on 12th December, 1791, in his 81st year.]

DEATH AND DOCTOR HORNBOOK,

A TRUE STORY.

(EDINBURGH EDITION, 1787.)

SOME books are lies *frae* end to end, — from
And some great lies were never penn'd:
Ev'n ministers they hae been *kenn'd*, — known
In holy rapture,
A *rousing whid* at times to vend, — startling fib
And *nail't* wi' Scripture. — confirm it

But this that I am *gaun* to tell, — going
Which lately on a night befel,
Is just as true's the Deil's in hell
Or Dublin city:
That e'er he nearer comes *oursel* — to ourselves
'S a *muckle* pity. — great

The *clachan yill* had made me *canty*, — village-ale, happy
I was na *fou*, but just had plenty; — full
I *stacher'd whyles*, but yet took *tent* ay — staggered occasionally, care
To *free* the ditches; — avoid
An' hillocks, stanes, an' bushes, *kenn'd* ay — knew
Frae *ghaists* an' witches. — ghosts

The rising moon began to *glowre* — stare fixedly
The distant Cumnock hills *out-owre*: — over the top of

To count her horns,* wi' a' my pow'r,
I set mysel;
But whether she had three or four,
I cou'd *na* tell. not

I was come round about the hill,
An' *todlin* down on Willie's mill,† walking totteringly
Setting my staff wi' a' my skill,
To keep me *sicker;* steady and safe
Tho' leeward *whyles*, against my will, now and then
I *took a bicker.* made a lurch

I there wi' Something did *forgather*, encounter
That pat me in an *eerie swither;* dismal hesitancy
An' awfu' scythe, out-owre ae *shouther*, shoulder
Clear-dangling, hang;
A three-tae'd *leister* on the ither salmon-spear
Lay, large an' lang.

Its stature seem'd lang Scotch ells twa,
The queerest shape that e'er I saw,
For fient a *wame* it had *ava;* belly at all
And then its shanks,
They were as thin, as sharp an' sma'
As cheeks o' *branks.*‡ wooden bridle

'*Guid-een*,' quo' I; 'Friend! hae ye been good-evening
mawin, mowing
'When ither folk are busy *sawin!*' § sowing

---

*Cumnock hills lie southeast from Tarbolton; and *hence*, it is argued by Dr. Waddell, the moon could not be seen in *crescent* from the poet's standpoint. The learned critic has forgot the "clachan yill."

†Willie's Mill, a mill near Tarbolton, on the river Faile, occupied by William Muir, a crony of Burns, and whose name appears as a subscriber to the Edinburgh edition of his poems.—J. H.

‡Waddell, on the authority of a local informant, says that *Death*, as well as *Hornbook*, had a local ant-type—Hugh Reid, of the Lochlans, "a long ghaist-like body, wi howe chafts and sma' shank-banes, whase deformities were weel seen for he wure short knee-breeks, thin stockings and muckle shoon." Burns "forgathered" with him that night "abune" Willie's Mill, and kent wha it was fu' brawly."—J. H.

§This rencontre happened in seed-time, 1785.—*R. B.*

It seem'd to mak a kind o' *stan*,' stand
But naething spak;
At length, says I, 'Friend! whare ye *gaun?* going
'Will ye go back?

It spak right *howe*,—'My name is Death, hollow
'But be na' *fley'd*.'—Quoth I, 'Guid faith, alarmed
'Ye're may be come to stap my breath;
'But *tent* me, *billie;* attend friend
'I *red* ye weel, tak care o' *skaith*, counsel harm
'See, there's a *gully!* clasp-knife

'Gudeman,' quo' he, 'put up your *whittle*, knife
'I'm no design'd to try its mettle;
'But if I did, I wad be *kittle* dangerously apt
'To be *mislear'd;* mischievous
'I wad na mind it, no that spittle
Out-owre my beard.' * over

'Weel, weel!' says I, 'a bargain be't; so
'Come, gies your hand, an' *sae* we're *gree't;* agreed
'We'll ease our shanks an' tak a seat—
'Come, *gies* your news; give us
'This while ye hae been *mony a gate*, many a road
'At mony a house.' †

'Ay, ay!' quo' he, an' shook his head,
'It's e'en a lang, lang time indeed
'Sin' I began to *nick* the thread, cut
'An' choke the breath:
'Folk *maun* do something for their bread, must
'An' *sae* maun Death. so

---

* Burns here commits a solecism in giving the skeleton Death a beard, if we are to accept his words in their literal sense. The poet, however, really makes use of a common Scotch phrase expressive of supreme indifference or contempt, without thinking of its literal meaning.—J. H.

† An epidemical fever was then raging in that country.—*R. B.*

'*Sax* thousand years are near-hand fled — six
'*Sin'* I was to the *butching* bred, — since butchering
'An' mony a scheme in vain's been laid
'To *stap* or *scar* me; — stop scare
'Till ane Hornbook's* ta'en up the trade,
'And faith! he'll *waur* me. — beat

'Ye ken Jock Hornbook i' the Clachan—
'Deil *mak* his *kings-hood* in a *spleuchan*!— — put self-consequence tobacco pouch
'He's grown sae weel acquaint wi' Buchan †
'And *ither chaps*, — other fellows
'The *weans haud* out their fingers laughin, — children hold
'An' *pouk* my hips. — pluck

'See, here's a scythe, an' there's a dart,
'They hae pierc'd mony a gallant heart;
'But Doctor Hornbook wi' his art
'An' cursed skill,
'Has made them baith no worth a f—t,
'*D—n'd haet* they'll kill! — not a whit

''Twas but yestreen, nae farther gane,
'I threw a noble throw at ane;
'Wi' less, I'm sure, I've hundreds slain;
'But deil-ma-care,
'It just *play'd dirl* on the bane, — gave a tremulous stroke
'But did nae mair.

'Hornbook was by, wi' ready art,
'An' had sae fortify'd the part,

---

* This gentleman, Dr. Hornbook, is professionally a brother of the sovereign order of the ferula; but, by intuition and inspiration, is at once an apothecary, surgeon, and physician.—*R. B.*

† Buchan's Domestic Medicine.—*R. B.* Dr. Wm. Buchan died in 1805. His book is still popular in Scotland.

'That when I lookèd to my dart,
'It was sae blunt,
'*Fient haet o't* wad hae pierced the heart — Deuce a bit of it
'Of a *kail-runt*. — kale-stalk

'I drew my scythe in sic a fury,
'I near-hand *cowpit* wi' my hurry, — overbalanced myself
'But yet the bauld Apothecary
'Withstood the shock;
'I might as weel hae try'd a quarry
'O' hard whin rock.

'Ev'n them he *canna* get attended, — cannot
'Altho' their face he ne'er had *kend* it, — known
'Just —— in a kail-blade, an' send it,
'As soon's he smells 't,
'Baith their disease, and what will mend it,
'At once he tells 't.

'And then a' doctor's saws an' *whittles*, — cutting instruments
'Of a' dimensions, shapes, an' mettles,
'A' kinds o' boxes, mugs, an' bottles,
'He's sure to *hae*; — have
'Their Latin names as fast he rattles
'As A B C.

'Calces o' fossils, earths, and trees;
'True sal-marinum o' the seas;
'The farina of beans an' pease,
'He has't in plenty;
'Aqua-fontis, what you please,
'He can content ye.

'*Forbye* some new, uncommon weapons, — besides
'Urinus spiritus of capons;

'Or mite-horn shavings, filings, scrapings,
'Distilled per se;
'Sal-alkali o' midge-tail clippings,
'And mony *mae*.' more

'*Waes me* for Johnie Ged's* Hole now,' woe is
Quoth I, 'if that *thae* news be true! these
'His braw calf-ward† whare *gowans* grew, daisies
'Sae white and bonie,
'Nae doubt they'll *rive it wi' the plew*; plough it up
'They'll ruin Johnie!'

The creature grain'd an *eldritch* laugh, ghastly and unearthly
And says, 'Ye needna yoke the *pleugh*, plough
'Kirkyards will soon be till'd eneugh,
'Tak ye nae fear:
'They'll a' be trench'd wi mony a *sheugh*, trench
'In twa-three year.

'Whare I kill'd ane, a fair strae death,‡
'By loss o' blood or want of breath,
'This night I'm free to tak my *aith*, oath
'That Hornbook's skill
'Has clad a score i' their last *claith*, cloth
'By drap an' pill.

'An honest *wabster* to his trade, weaver
'Whase wife's twa *nieves* were scarce weel-bred, fists
Gat *tippence*-worth to mend her head, twopence
'When it was *sair*; sore
'The wife *slade cannie* to her bed, slid quietly
'But ne'er spak *mair*. more

---

* The grave-digger.—*R. B.* Ged's Hole, the grave, the stomach of the insatiable pike. In Scotland the pike is called the ged.—J. H.

† Churchyard, so-called from being used as an enclosure for calves, etc.—J. H.

‡ Death in bed, which was often of straw.—J. H.

'A country laird had ta'en the *batts*, botts
'Or some *curmurring* in his guts, disturbance
'His only son for Hornbook sets,
'An' pays him well:
'The lad, for twa guid *gimmer-pets*, two-year-old ewes
'Was *laird* himsel. land-owner

'A bonie lass—ye kend her name—
'Some ill-brewn drink had *hov'd* her *wame*; swelled belly
'She trusts hersel, to hide the shame,
'In Hornbook's care;
'Horn sent her aff to her lang hame,
'To hide it there.

'That's just a *swatch* o' Hornbook's way; sample
'Thus goes he on from day to day,
'Thus does he poison, kill, an' slay,
'An's weel paid for't;
'Yet stops me o' my lawfu' prey,
'Wi' his d—n'd dirt:

'But, hark! I'll tell you of a plot,
'Tho' dinna ye be speakin o't;
'I'll nail the self-conceited sot,
'As dead's a herrin;
'*Niest* time we meet, I'll *wad* a groat, next wager
'He gets his *fairin!*' reward

But just as he began to tell,
The auld kirk-hammer strak the bell
Some wee short hour *ayont* the *twal*, beyond twelve
Which rais'd us *baith*: both
I took the way that pleas'd mysel,
And sae did Death.

[The author himself has fixed the date of this poem, which, like Tam-o'-Shanter, was struck off almost complete at one heat; for Gilbert has told us that his brother repeated the stanzas to him on the day following the night of the *tiff* with Wilson at the mason lodge. John Wilson, parish schoolmaster at Tarbolton, had also a small grocery shop where he sold common drugs, and gave occasional medical advice in simple cases, and thus became a person of some importance in the village. According to Mr. Lockhart, he was not merely compelled, through the force and widely-spread popularity of this attractive satire, to close his shop, but to abandon his school-craft also, in consequence of his pupils, one by one, deserting him. "Hornbook" removed to Glasgow, and, by dint of his talents and assiduity, at length obtained the respectable situation of session-clerk of Gorbals parish. He died January 13, 1839. Many a time in his latter days he has been heard, "over a bowl of punch, to bless the lucky hour when the dominie of Tarbolton provoked the castigation of Robert Burns."

In the author's earlier editions the word *did*, in verse sixth, ungrammatically reads "does;" and line fifth of the opening stanza reads thus:—

"Great lies and nonsense baith to vend."]

EPISTLE TO J. LAPRAIK,

AN OLD SCOTTISH BARD.—APRIL 1, 1785.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

WHILE briers an' woodbines budding green,
An' *paitricks scraichin* loud at e'en, partridges screeching
An' morning *poussie whiddin* seen, hare scudding
Inspire my muse,
This freedom, in an unknown frien',
I pray excuse.

On Fasten-e'en * we had a *rockin*, social meeting or bee
To *ca' the crack* and weave our stockin; to chat

* Shrovetide, a festival that used to be religiously observed in Scotland.—J. H.

And there was *muckle* fun and jokin, much
Ye need na doubt;
At length we had a hearty *yokin*, set-to
At '*sang about.*' song in turns

There was ae sang, amang the rest,
Aboon them a' it pleas'd me best, above
That some kind husband had addrest
To some sweet wife;
It *thirl'd* the heart-strings thro' the breast, thrilled
A' to the life.

I've scarce heard ought describ'd sae weel,
What gen'rous, manly bosoms feel;
Thought I, "can this be Pope, or Steele,
Or Beattie's wark?"
They *tauld* me 'twas an odd kind *chiel* told fellow
About Muirkirk.*

It pat me *fidgin-fain* to hear't, excitedly eager
An' sae about him there I *spier't;* enquired
Then a' that *kent* him round declar'd knew
He had *ingine;* genius (*ingenium*)
That nane excell'd it, few cam near't,
It was sae fine:

That, set him to a pint of ale,
An' either *douce* or merry tale, quietly grave
Or rhymes an' sangs he'd made himsel,
Or witty catches—
'Tween Inverness an' Teviotdale,
He had few matches.

Then up I gat, an' swoor an *aith*, oath
Tho' I should pawn my pleugh an' *graith*, harness

* A little town among the hills in the southeast part of Ayrshire.—J. H.

Or die a *cadger pownie's* death, hawker pony's
At some *dyke-back*, back of a fence
A pint' an' gill I'd gie them baith,
To hear your *crack*. chat

But, first an' foremost, I should tell,
Amaist as soon as I could spell,
I to the *crambo-jingle* fell, rhyming
Tho' rude an' rough—
Yet *crooning* to a *body's sel*, humming person's self
Does *weel eneugh*. well enough

I am nae poet, in a sense,
But just a rhymer like by chance,
An' hae to learning nae pretence;
Yet, what the matter?
Whene'er my muse does on me glance,
I jingle at her.

Your critic-folk may cock their nose,
And say, "how can you e'er propose—
You wha *ken* hardly verse frae prose— know
To mak a sang?"
But, by your leave, my learned foes,
Ye're maybe wrang.

What's a' your jargon o' your schools—
Your Latin names for horns an' stools?
If honest Nature made you fools,
What *sairs* your grammars? serves
Ye'd better taen up spades and *shools*, shovels
Or *knappin-hammers*. stone-hammers

A set o' dull, conceited *hashes* fools
Confuse their brains in college classes!

They gang in *stirks*, and come out asses, year-old steers
Plain truth to speak ;
An' *syne* they think to climb Parnassus, thereafter
By dint o' Greek !

Gie me ae spark o' nature's fire, give
That's a' the learning I desire ;
Then tho' I drudge thro' *dub* an' mire mud
At *pleugh* or cart, plough
My muse, tho' hamely in attire,
May touch the heart.

O for a *spunk* o' Allan's * glee, spark
Or Fergusson's, the *bauld an' slee*, bold and sly
Or bright Lapraik's, my friend to be
If I can hit it !
That would be *lear* eneugh for me, learning
If I could get it.

Now, sir, if ye *hae* friends enow, have
Tho' real friends I b'lieve are few ;
Yet, if your catalogue be *fu'*, full
I'se no insist : I will not
But, *gif* ye want ae friend that's true, if
I'm on your list.

I *winna blaw* about mysel, will not brag
As ill I like my *fauts* to tell ; faults
But friends, an' folk that wish me well,
They sometimes *roose* me ; praise
Tho' I *maun* own, as mony still must
As far abuse me.

---

* Allan Ramsay.

There's *ae wee faut* they whiles lay to me, one little fault
I like the lasses—Gude forgie me!
For mony a *plack* they *wheedle frae* me coin coax from
At dance or fair;
Maybe some *ither* thing they *gie* me, other give
They *weel* can spare. well

But Mauchline Race * or Mauchline Fair,
I should be proud to meet you there:
We'se gie ae night's discharge to care, we will give one
If we *forgather;* meet
An hae a *swap* o' rhymin-ware interchange
Wi' *ane anither.* one another

The four-gill chap,† we'se *gar* him clatter, make
An' *kirsen* him wi' reekin water; christen
Syne we'll sit down an' tak our *whitter*, then drink
To cheer our heart;
An' faith, we'se be acquainted better
Before we part.

Awa ye selfish, *warly* race, worldly
Wha think that *havins*, sense, an' grace, manners
Ev'n love an' friendship should give place
To *catch-the-plack!* money-making
I *dinna* like to see your face, do not
Nor hear your *crack.* chatter

But ye whom social pleasure charms,
Whose hearts the tide of kindness warms,
Who hold your being on the terms,
"Each aid the others,"
Come to my bowl, come to my arms,
My friends, my brothers!

---

* The race-course at Mauchline was on the high road near the poet's farm.

† The mutchkin, or pint, the largest measure for whiskey used in public-houses.—J. H.

But, to conclude my lang epistle,
As my auld pen's worn to the gristle,
Twa lines frae you wad gar me fissle,*
Who am most fervent,
While I can either sing or whistle,
Your friend and servant.

[We have already seen, in the epistle to Davie, how indulgently Burns regarded the rhyming qualities of his Ayrshire compeers. The song referred to in the third stanza of this poem commended itself so much to his sympathies that he took this method of becoming acquainted with its supposed author. We say *supposed* author; for in reality it was not Lapraik's own, but a piece he had found in an old magazine, which, by altering its structure a very little, and putting in a Scotch expression here and there, he had the assurance to pass off as his own composition. Burns, who never knew or suspected the plagiarism, afterwards dressed up Lapraik's version and had it printed in Johnson's *Museum*, where it stands, No. 205, set to an air by Oswald. Lockhart praises the opening verse, but remarks that (this song excepted) "it is not easy to understand Burns' admiration of Lapraik's poetry." The reader will find the original poem in the *Weekly Magazine*, October 14, 1773.

John Lapraik was nearly sixty years old when Burns sought acquaintance with him. He had inherited, through a line of ancestors, a small croft near Muirkirk; but happening to borrow money, by a bond thereon, from the Ayr Bank, he became involved in the ruin which soon overtook that unfortunate concern. On the strength of Burns' recorded admiration, the "Old Scottish Bard" ventured to have his poems printed, at the press of John Wilson, Kilmarnock; and these were published in 1788.]

(Lapraik's poems had little success, Burns being nearly his sole admirer. Chambers tells us that Burns, when he received Lapraik's letter in reply to this epistle, was sowing; and, so eagerly did he peruse it, that he let the sheet drop and spilled the seed, and it was not till he had finished reading that he discovered the loss he had sustained.—J. H.)

* Would make me fidget with pleasure.

SECOND EPISTLE TO J. LAPRAIK.

APRIL 21, 1785.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

WHILE *new-ca'd kye rowte* at the stake — newly-calved, cows low
An' pownies *reek* in pleugh or *braik*, — smoke, loaded harrow
This hour on e'enin's edge I take,
To own I'm debtor
To honest-hearted, auld Lapraik,
For his kind letter.

Forjesket sair, with weary legs, — jaded sore
Rattlin the corn out-owre the *rigs*, — ridges
Or dealing thro' amang the *naigs* — nags
Their ten-hours' bite,
My awkwart muse sair pleads and begs
I would na write.

The tapetless, ramfeezl'd hizzie,*
She's saft at best an' something lazy:
Quo' she, "ye ken we've been sae busy
This month an' mair,
That trowth, my head is grown right dizzie,
An' something sair."

Her *dowff* excuses *pat* me mad; — stupid, put
"Conscience," says I, "ye *thowless* jade! — pithless
I'll write, an' that a *hearty blaud*, — large broad-sheet
This vera night;
So dinna ye affront your trade,
But rhyme it right.

---

* The silly, tired-out hussy.

"Shall *bauld* Lapraik, the king o' hearts, brave
Tho' mankind were a pack o' *cartes*, cards
Roose you sae weel for your deserts, praise
In terms sae friendly;
Yet ye'll neglect to *shaw* your parts show
An' thank him kindly?"

Sae I gat paper *in a blink*, instantly
An' down *gaed* stumpie in the ink: went
Quoth I, "before I sleep a wink,
I vow I'll close it;
An' if ye *winna* mak it *clink*, will not rhyme
By Jove, I'll prose it!"

Sae I've begun to scrawl, but whether
In rhyme, or prose, or *baith* thegither; both
Or some hotch-potch that's rightly neither,
Let time mak proof;
But I shall scribble down some *blether* nonsense
Just clean *aff-loof*. off-hand

My worthy friend, ne'er grudge an' carp,
Tho' fortune use you hard an' sharp;
Come, *kittle* up your moorland harp tickle
Wi' gleesome touch!
Ne'er mind how Fortune waft an warp;
She's but a b-tch.

She's *gien* me mony a *jirt* an' *fleg*, given squeeze / kick
Sin' I could *striddle* owre a rig; straddle
But, by the L—d, tho' I should beg
Wi' *lyart pow*, grey head
I'll laugh an' sing, an' shake my leg,
As lang's *I dow!* am able

Now comes the sax-an-twentieth simmer
I've seen the bud upo' the timmer,
Still persecuted by the *limmer* jade
Frae year to year;
But yet, despite the *kittle kimmer*, skittish wench
I, Rob, am here.

Do ye envy the city gent,
Behint a *kist* to lie an' *sklent;* chest prevaricate
Or purse-proud, big wi' cent. per cent.
An' *muckle wame*, large belly
In some bit *brugh* to represent burgh
A *bailie's* name? alderman's

Or is't the *paughty* feudal *thane*, supercilious peer
Wi' ruffl'd *sark* an' glancing cane, shirt
Wha thinks himsel *nae sheep-shank bane*, of no little account
But lordly stalks;
While caps and bonnets aff are *taen*, taken
As by he walks?

"O Thou wha *gies* us each *guid* gift! gives good
Gie me o' wit an' sense a lift,
Then turn me, if Thou please adrift,
Thro' Scotland wide;
Wi' cits nor lairds I *wadna shift*, would not change
In a' their pride!"

Were this the charter of our state,
"On pain o' hell be rich an' great,"
Damnation then would be our fate,
Beyond remead;
But, thanks to heaven, that's no the *gate* way
We learn our creed.

For thus the royal mandate ran,
When first the human race began;
"The social, friendly, honest man,
Whate'er he be—
'Tis *he* fulfils great Nature's plan,
And none but he."

O mandate glorious and divine!
The followers o' the ragged nine*—
Poor, thoughtless devils—yet may shine
In glorious light;
While sordid sons o' Mammon's line
Are dark as night!

Tho' here they scrape, an' squeeze, an' growl,
Their worthless *nievefu'* of a soul handful
May in some future carcase howl,
The forest's fright;
Or in some day-detesting owl
May shun the light.

Then may Lapraik and Burns arise,
To reach their native, kindred skies,
And sing their pleasures, hopes an' joys,
In some mild sphere;
Still closer knit in friendship's ties,
Each passing year!

[Allan Cunningham says, respecting this poem, "I have heard one of our greatest English poets (Wordsworth) recite with commendation most of the stanzas, pointing out their all but inimitable ease and happiness of thought and language. He remarked, however, that Burns was either fond of out-of-the-way sort of words, or that he *made* them occasionally in his fits of feeling and fancy. The phrase, 'tapetless, ramfeezled hizzie,' in

* Motherwell, without a word of comment, altered this reading to "ragged followers o' the nine," which certainly seems a more consistent one. The change is adopted by Gilfillan.

particular, he suspected to be new to the Scotch dialect; but I quoted to him the following passage from a letter of William Cowper, dated August, 1787:—'Poor Burns loses much of his deserved praise in this country through our ignorance of his language. I despair of meeting with any Englishman who will take the pains that I have taken to understand him. His candle is light, but shut up in a dark lantern. I lent him to a very sensible neighbor of mine; but the uncouth dialect spoiled all; and, before he had read him through, he was quite *ramfeezled*.' "]

EPISTLE TO WILLIAM SIMSON,

SCHOOLMASTER, OCHILTREE.—MAY, 1785.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

I *gat* your letter, *winsome* Willie; — got, winning
Wi' gratefu' heart I thank you *brawlie;* — heartily
Tho' I *maun* say't, I *wad* be silly, — must, would
And *unco* vain, — very
Should I believe, my coaxin *billie*, — brother
Your flatterin strain.

But I'se believe ye kindly meant it:
I *sud* be *laith* to think ye hinted — should, loath
Ironic satire, *sidelins sklented* — glanced sideways
On my poor musie;
Tho' in sic *phraisin* terms ye've penn'd it, — flattering
I scarce excuse ye.

My senses wad be in a *creel*,* — whirl
Should I but dare a hope to *speel*, — climb
Wi' Allan,† or wi' Gilbertfield,‡
The *braes* o' fame; — heights

---

*I should have lost my head. In Ayrshire, when a person is unduly excited or confused about anything, his senses are said to be "in a creel."

†Allan Ramsay, a celebrated Scotch poet of the beginning of the seventeenth century, was a barber in Edinburgh. His best known piece is a drama entitled, "The Gentle Shepherd."

‡William Hamilton, of Gilbertfield, a Scotch poet and contemporary of Allan Ramsay.

Or Fergusson,* the writer-chiel,
A deathless name.

(O Fergusson! thy glorious parts
Ill suited law's dry, musty arts!
My curse upon your *whunstane* hearts, whinstone
Ye *E'nbrugh* gentry! Edinburgh
The tythe *o'* what ye waste at *cartes* of cards
Wad *stow'd* his pantry!) stored

Yet when a tale comes i' my head,
Or lasses *gie* my heart a *screed*— give rent
As *whiles* they're like to be my *dead*, sometimes death
(O sad disease!)
I *kittle* up my rustic reed; tickle
It *gies* me ease. gives

Auld Coila,† now may *fidge fu' fain*, fidget with pride
She's gotten poets o' her *ain;* own
Chiels wha their *chanters* winna *hain*, fellows bag-pipes spare
But tune their lays,
Till echoes a' resound again
Her weel-sung praise.

Nae poet thought her worth his while,
To set her name in measur'd style;
She lay like some *unkenn'd-of* isle unknown
Beside New Holland,
Or whare wild-meeting oceans boil
Besouth Magellan.

---

* Robert Fergusson, born 1751, educated at University of St. Andrews, and employed in the office of the Commissary Clerk, Edinburgh, published in 1773 a volume of poems characterized by humor, fancy and purity of language. Burns erected a memorial stone over his grave in Edinburgh.—J. H.

† Kyle. See note to *The Twa Dogs*, p. 203.

Ramsay an' famous Fergusson
Gied Forth an' Tay a lift *aboon;* gave above
Yarrow an' Tweed, to *monie* a tune, many
Owre Scotland rings; over
While Irwin, Lugar, Ayr, an' Doon *
Naebody sings.

Th' Illissus, Tiber, Thames, an' Seine,
Glide sweet in monie a tunefu' line:
But, Willie, set your *fit* to mine, † foot
An' *cock* your crest; erect
We'll *gar* our streams an' burnies shine make
Up *wi'* the best! with

We'll sing auld Coila's plains an' *fells*, uplands
Her moors red-brown wi' heather bells,
Her banks an' *braes*, her *dens* and dells, heights hollows
Whare glorious Wallace
Aft *bure the gree*, as story tells, bore the palm
Frae *Suthron billies.* Southern competitors

At Wallace' name, what Scottish blood
But boils up in a spring-tide flood!
Oft have our fearless fathers strode
By Wallace' side,
Still pressing onward, red-wat-shod, ‡
Or glorious died!

O sweet are Coila's *haughs* an' woods, holms
When *lintwhites* chant amang the buds, linnets
And *jinkin* hares, in amorous *whids*, § playful capers
Their loves enjoy;
While thro' the braes the *cushat croods* wood-pigeon coos
With *wailfu'* cry! wailing

* The four principal streams of Ayrshire, all in, or bordering, Kyle.—J. H.
† Unite with me.—J. H.
‡ Shoes wet with blood.
§ Admirably descriptive of the amorous capers of March hares.—J. H.

Ev'n winter bleak has charms for me,
When winds rave thro' the naked tree;
Or frosts on hills of Ochiltree *
Are hoary gray;
Or blinding drifts wild-furious *flee*, fly
Dark'ning the day!

O Nature! a' thy shews an' forms
To feeling, pensive hearts *hae* charms! have
Whether the summer kindly warms,
Wi' life an' light;
Or winter howls, in gusty storms,
The lang, dark night!

The muse, nae poet ever *fand* her, found
Till *by himsel* he learn'd to wander, all alone
Adown some trottin burn's meander,
An' no think lang: not find it dull
O sweet to stray, an' pensive ponder
A heart-felt sang!

The *warly* race may drudge an' drive, worldly
Hog-shouther, jundie,† stretch, an' strive;
Let me fair Nature's face *descrive*, describe
And I, wi' pleasure,
Shall let the busy, grumbling hive
Bum owre their treasure. hum like a bee

Fareweel, "my rhyme-composing" brither!
We've been owre lang *unkenn'd* to ither: unknown
Now let us lay our heads thegither,
In love fraternal:
May envy *wallop* in a *tether*, struggle halter
Black fiend, infernal!

---

* A village on the Lugar some ten miles east of Ayr.—J. H.
† Jostle with shoulder and elbow.

While Highlandmen hate tolls an' taxes;
While moorlan *herds* like guid, fat — shepherds
*braxies;** — dead sheep
While terra firma, on her axis,
Diurnal turns;
Count on a friend, in faith an' practice,
In Robert Burns.†

POSTSCRIPT.

My memory's no worth a *preen;* — pin
I had *amaist* forgotten clean, — almost
Ye bade me write you what they mean
By this 'new-light,'‡
'Bout which our *herds* sae aft hae been — pastors
Maist like to fight. — almost

In days when mankind were but *callans* — boys
At grammar, logic, an' sic talents,
They took nae pains their speech to balance,
Or rules to *gie;* — give
But spak their thoughts in plain,
braid *lallans,* — Lowland Scotch
Like you or me.

In *thae* auld times, they thought the moon, — these
Just like a *sark,* or pair o' *shoon,* — shirt — shoes

---

* The sheep that die on the hills are the perquisite of the shepherd.—J. H.

† This is perhaps the solitary instance of the poet writing his name with one syllable prior to April 14, 1786. The closing stanza of the second epistle to Lapraik shows the short spelling, but that verse was so altered after the date referred to. The original MS. of the present poem has not been found.

‡ *New-Light* was the term applied to the approximately rationalistic views held by a section of the Scottish church. The work of Dr. John Taylor, of Norwich, entitled "The Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin," had been extensively read in Scotland by both clergy and laity, and had given rise to a pretty definite form of rationalism. Even the poet's father was inclined to soften the rigid Calvinism of the orthodox or "Auld-Light" party. Burns himself was in full sympathy with the New Light section.—J. H.

Wore by degrees, till her last *roon* selvage
Gaed past their viewin ; went
An' shortly after she was done
They *gat* a new *ane*. got one

This past for certain, undisputed ;
It *ne'er* cam *i'* their heads to doubt it, never in
Till *chiels* gat up an' *wad* confute it, fellows would
An' *ca'd* it wrang ; called
An' *muckle din* there was about it, much noise
Baith loud an 'lang. both

Some herds, weel learn'd upo' the *beuk*, book
Wad *threap auld* folk the thing *misteuk* ; maintain old mistook
For 'twas the auld moon turn'd a *neuk* corner
An' out o' sight,
An' *backlins-comin*, to the *leuk*, coming backward view
She grew *mair* bright. more

This was denied, it was affirm'd ;
The *herds and hissels* were alarm'd ; pastors and flocks
The rev'rend gray-beards rav'd an' storm'd,
That beardless *laddies* boys
Should think they better were inform'd,
Than their *auld daddies*. old dads

Frae less to mair, it *gaed* to *sticks* ; from went cudgels
Frae words an' *aiths*, to *clours* an' *nicks* ; oaths bruises cuts
An' *monie* a fallow *gat* his licks, many got
Wi' hearty *crunt* ; knock on the head
An' some, to learn them for their tricks,
Were hang'd an' *brunt*. burned

This game was play'd in mony lands, apostles
An' "auld-light"* *caddies*† *bure sic* hands, bore such

---

*See note *New Light* on preceding page.

†Caddies were properly men who ran errands, etc., in the streets of Edinburgh ; hence, the word signifies one charged with a message, an apostle.—J. H.

That faith, the youngsters *took the sands* — fled to the seashore
Wi' nimble *shanks;* — legs
Till *lairds* forbad, by strict commands, — authorities
Sic *bluidy pranks.** — bloody sports

But "new-light" herds gat sic a *cowe*, — humbling
Folk thought them ruin'd *stick-an-stowe;* — stalk and blade (*totally*)
Till now, amaist on ev'ry *knowe* — knoll (*pulpit*)
Ye'll find ane plac'd;
An' some, their "new-light" fair avow,
Just quite barefac'd.

Nae doubt the "auld-light" flocks are bleatin;
Their zealous herds are vex'd and sweatin;
Mysel, I've even seen them *greetin* — weeping
Wi' *girnin* spite, — grinning
To hear the moon sae sadly lied on
By word an' write.

But shortly they will *cowe* the *louns!* — humble rascals
Some "auld-light" herds in *neebor touns* — neighboring parishes
Are mind't, in things they ca' balloons,
To tak a flight;
An' stay *ae* month amang the moons — one
An' see them right.

Guid observation they will *gie* them; — good give
An' when the auld moon's *gaun* to *lea'e* them, — going leave
The hindmost *shaird*, they'll fetch it wi' them, — shred
Just i' their *pouch;* — pocket
An' when the "new-light" *billies* see them, — brethren
I think they'll crouch!

---

*This stanza tells how the orthodox have been in the habit of persecuting heretics, till the latter fled over the sea, and till the rulers of the State forbade such bloody pranks.—J. H.

Sae, ye observe that a' this *clatter* — so — idle talk
Is naething but a "moonshine matter;"
But tho' dull prose-folk Latin splatter
In logic *tulyie*, — contention
I hope we bardies *ken* some better — know
Than mind sic *brulyie*. — broil

[At the date of this epistle, William Simson was parish schoolmaster at the small village of Ochiltree, situated on the left bank of the river Lugar, at a distance of five miles south from the poet's farm. He appears to have introduced himself to Burns by sending him a complimentary letter, after having seen some of his poems in manuscript, particularly the "Holy Tulyie," to which Burns' postscript specially applies. In 1788, Simson was appointed parish teacher in the town of Cumnock, four miles farther up the Lugar, where he continued till his death, in 1815. It does not appear from the poet's correspondence, or otherwise, that the acquaintanceship betwixt Burns and Simson, thus so auspiciously begun in 1785, was continued in after-life. He was succeeded as teacher at Ochiltree in 1788 by a brother, Patrick Simson, who had been formerly parish schoolmaster at Straiton, in Carrick. A volume of rhyming-ware, left by William Simson, passed at his death into his brother's possession, and, judging from what has been published of its contents, he seems to have better merited the distinction—a "rhyme-composing brother" of Burns—than either Sillar or Lapraik. He had the good sense not to rush into print like them, on the mere strength of the kindly compliments paid to them by the Ayrshire Bard in his published epistles.

After William Simson's death, his brother Patrick was often visited at Ochiltree by wandering pilgrims, for the sake of the interest conferred by this admired epistle. Allan Cunningham, confounding the one brother with the other, makes reference to William Simson as still surviving in 1834. Through the kindness of the Rev. D. Hogg, Kirkmahoe, we have been shewn "Winsome Willie's" signature, which is our authority for dropping the letter *p* from his surname.]

ONE NIGHT AS I DID WANDER.

A FRAGMENT.—MAY, 1785.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

ONE night as I did wander,
When *corn* begins to shoot, oats
I sat me down to ponder,
Upon an *auld* tree-root: old
Auld Ayr ran by before me,
And *bicker'd* to the seas; careered cheerily
A *cushat crooded* o'er me, wood-pigeon cooed
That echoed through the braes.

[This fragment seems to have been intended as the opening of a poem similar in style to "Man was made to mourn." It has a descriptive ring about it, like the first verse of the "Holy Fair;" and the scenery indicated is not unlike that of Ballochmyle or Barskimming, the two nearest points where the poet could reach the river Ayr from Mauchline. The fragment first appeared in company with another little unfinished piece, in which the poet contemplates crossing the ocean, and being severed from his "Jean."*]

FRAGMENT OF SONG—"MY JEAN!"

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1788.)

THO' cruel fate should bid us part,
Far as the pole and line,

---

* This and the three immediately following pieces are in the very peculiar position, that, while they are inserted in the poet's Glenriddell abridgement of his first Common-place Book, between the dates September, 1784, and June, 1785, they do not appear in the Common-place Book itself, now preserved at Greenock. On examining carefully the latter manuscript, one is forced to the conclusion that these four pieces never at any time formed a portion of that book. Robert Chambers, who never saw the Greenock MS. referred to, was stumbled at so early a date as May, 1785, "being attached to these pieces, especially to the song about 'My Jean,'" which, from internal evidence, would seem to belong to the first half of 1786. However, as Burns himself inserted these as forming a portion of his earliest Common-place Book, ending in October, 1785, we feel bound to place them in the order of time to which he assigned them.

Her dear idea round my heart,
  Should tenderly entwine.
Tho' mountains rise, and deserts howl,
  And oceans roar between;
Yet, dearer than my deathless soul,
  I still would love my Jean.

[The affection for Jean Armour displayed here is quite in keeping with the language and sentiment expressed in the "Epistle to Davie." Indeed, on comparing these, the reader will naturally conclude that they must have been composed about the same date. In the one, we find the poet-lover thus expressing himself—

"Her dear idea brings relief and solace to my breast;"

and here he says, almost in the identical words—

"Her dear idea round my heart shall tenderly entwine."

Again, in the "Epistle," he invokes heaven to witness that—

"The life-blood streaming through my heart,
Or my more dear immortal part,
Is not more fondly dear."

And in this little song—the first sketch of the world-famous "Of a' the airts," &c.—the same language is employed:—

"Yet, dearer than my deathless soul,
I still would love my Jean."

The complete copy of the "Epistle to Davie," which the poet presented to Aiken in 1786, certainly bears the date "January, 1785," as we have already noticed; but we must not therefore conclude (as Chambers does) that the *whole* of the poem was completed at so early a date. The references to Jean are thrown in near the *close* of the poem, and if it were now possible to get a sight of the original, as actually forwarded to Sillar in January, 1785, it would likely shew very different readings in the three closing stanzas, from those in the printed copy. The early date assigned to that poem was a puzzle to Lockhart, not only from its wonderful perfection in so very intricate and difficult a measure, but also from its glowing celebration of Jean during the very infancy of his acquaintance with her.]

SONG—RANTIN, ROVIN ROBIN.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

THERE was a lad was born in Kyle,*
But whatna day o' whatna style, †
I doubt it's hardly worth the while
To be sae nice wi' Robin.

Chor.—Robin was a rovin boy,
Rantin, rovin, rantin, rovin,
Robin was a rovin boy,
Rantin, rovin Robin!

Our monarch's hindmost year but *ane* — one
Was five-and-twenty days begun, ‡
'Twas then a blast o' Janwar' win'
Blew hansel § in on Robin.
Robin was, &c.

The gossip *keekit* in his *loof*, — peered palm
Quo' *scho*, "Wha lives will see the proof, — she
This *waly* boy will be nae *coof*: — goodly blockhead
I think we'll *ca'* him Robin." — call
Robin was, &c.

"He'll *hae* misfortunes great an' *sma'*, — have small
But *ay* a heart *aboon* them *a'*, — ever above all
He'll be a credit *till* us a',— — to
We'll a' be proud o' Robin."
Robin was, &c.

---

* The central district of Ayrshire. See note on *The Twa Dogs*, p. 203.

† But which day of which style. The new style of computing time had been lately introduced, and both styles were used at this time in Scotland. In cities the new style was generally adopted, but people living in remote country districts still adhered to the old style, as is the case in Russia to this day.—J. H.

‡ January 25, 1759, the date of my bardship's vital existence.—*R. B.*

§ A hansel is the first gift given on any particular occasion or at any particular season.—J. H.

"But sure as three times three mak nine,
I see by *ilka* score and line, every
This chap will dearly like our kin',
So leeze me on* thee! Robin."
Robin was, &c.

"*Guid* faith," quo' *scho*, "I doubt you, sir, good / she
Ye *gar* the lasses lie aspar make
But twenty *fauts* ye may hae *waur* faults worse
So blessins on thee! Robin."
Robin was, &c.

[Referring to our notes to the two preceding pieces, we may observe that this song displays a vivid forecast of the author's coming fame. Dr. Waddell, in the mistaken belief that it was composed in 1784, calls it "a perfect prophetic and pictorial idyll, which must be accepted as a very singular and truthful anticipation of his own future greatness."

The only variation of the poet's text which we have to note is first found in Cunningham's edition (1834). His reading of the two opening lines of the closing stanza is as follows:—

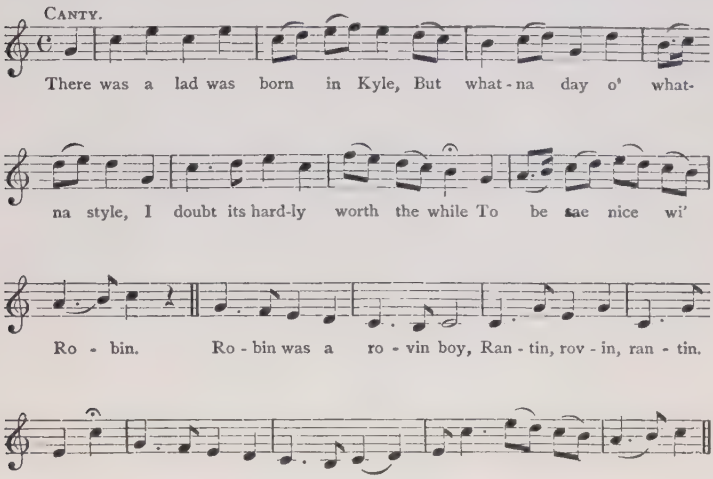
"Gude faith!" quo' scho, "I doubt you gar
The bonie lassie lie aspar."

The reverend editor above quoted says on this point:—"All attempts to decorate or to enrich this verse with better rhymes and worse sense, not only vitiate its moral integrity, but destroy its pictorial truthfulness; in a word, vulgarise and debase it. That Cromek's edition is the correct edition, there cannot be a shadow of a doubt; and it should be restored and preserved accordingly."

Burns composed this song to the tune of "Dainty Davie," and he has anxiously pointed out that the chorus is set to the low part of the melody. Templeton, the eminent vocalist, selected another air—"O gin ye were dead, gudeman"—for his own singing of this song, which necessitated not only an alteration of the words of the chorus to make it fit the music, but a change in other parts of the air to suit it to the words. The tune, "Dainty Davie," is one of our oldest; it appears in Playford's collection,

* Leeze me on: *i. e.*, let me set my heart on.

1657; and as a proper vocal set of the melody is now nowhere to be found, we here annex it.



In the MS. of early pieces presented by the poet to Mrs. Dunlop, to which we have referred at pp. 11 and 33 *supra*, a remarkable travestie of the foregoing song is inserted thus:—

There was a birkie born in Kyle,
But whatna day o' whatna style,
I doubt its hardly worth the while
  To be sae nice wi' Davie.
    Leeze me on thy curly pow,
      Bonie Davie, dainty Davie!
    Leeze me on thy curly pow,
      Thou'se ay my dainty Davie.

The name "Davie," instead of Robin, is thus continued throughout the song, and at verse 4, line 3, instead of "He'll be a credit to us a'," we read, "He'll gie his daddie's name a blaw."]

(According to Chambers, there was some rumor, but upon no very valid authority so far as he could learn, that some wayfaring woman, who chanced to be present at the poet's birth, actually announced some such prophecy respecting the infant placed in her arms.—J. H.)

ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF ROBERT RUISSEAUX.*

(CROMEK, 1808.)

Now Robin lies in his last *lair*, resting-place
He'll gabble rhyme, nor sing *nae mair;* no more
Cauld poverty, wi' hungry stare, cold
Nae mair shall fear him;
Nor anxious fear, nor *cankert* care, cankered
E'er mair come near him.

To tell the truth, they seldom *fash't* him, troubled
Except the moment that they crush'd him;
For *sune* as chance or fate had hush't 'em soon
Tho' e'er sae short,
Then wi' a rhyme or sang he lash'd 'em,
And thought it sport.

Tho' he was bred to *kintra-wark*, work on the farm
And counted was baith *wight* and *stark*, stout strong
Yet that was never Robin's mark
To *mak* a man; make
But tell him, he was learn'd and *clark*, clerkly
Ye *roos'd* him than! extolled

[We are greatly mistaken if Burns did not compose this "Elegy" after he had issued his prospectus to publish the wonderful Kilmarnock volume. It seems highly probable that it was intended to occupy the last page of that volume, but withdrawn when he had composed the far superior "Poet's Epitaph," which so beautifully closes the work.

Until the original MS. shall be recovered, from which Cromek printed, in the "Reliques," the poet's own abridged copy of his first Common-place Book, the exact chronological position of the preceding four pieces cannot be definitely fixed.]

* Fr. for rivulets, or burns, a play upon his own name.

EPISTLE TO JOHN GOLDIE, IN KILMARNOCK,

AUTHOR OF THE GOSPEL RECOVERED.—AUGUST, 1785.

(THE GLENRIDDELL MSS., 1874.)

O GOWDIE, terror *o'* the whigs, of
Dread o' blackcoats and reverend wigs!
Sour Bigotry on his last legs
Girns an' looks back, grins
Wishing the ten Egyptian plagues
May seize you quick.

Poor gapin, *glowrin* Superstition! staring amazedly
Wae's me, she's in a sad condition: woe is me
Fye! bring Black Jock,* her state physician,
To see her water:
Alas, there's ground for great suspicion
She'll ne'er get better.

Enthusiasm's past redemption,
Gane in a gallopin consumption: far gone
Not *a'* her quacks, wi' a' their *gumption*, all smartness
Can ever mend her;
Her feeble pulse *gies* strong presumption, gives
She'll soon surrender.

Auld Orthodoxy lang did *grapple*, grope about
For every hole to get a *stapple*;† stopple
But now she *fetches* at the *thrapple*, gasps throat
An' fights for breath;
Haste, gie her name up in the chapel,‡
Near unto death.

---

* The Rev. J. Russell, Kilmarnock.—*R. B.*

† A handful of straw used to stop a hole in a thatched roof is called a stapple. Orthodoxy long tried to stop all sources of error, and to repair all the injury the church received through "New-Light" heresy.—J. H.

‡ Get her prayed for in Mr. Russell's kirk (known as the chapel) as being at the point of death.—J. H.

It's you an' Taylor * are the chief
To blame for *a'* this black mischief; † all
But could the L—d's *ain* folk get leave, own
A *toom* tar barrel empty
An' twa *red peats wad* bring relief, blazing turfs would
And end the quarrel.

For me, my skill's but very *sma'*, small
An' skill in prose I've *nane ava;* none at all
But *quietlenswise*, between us twa, quietly
Weel may ye speed! well
And tho' they *sud* you *sair misca'*, should sore miscall
Ne'er *fash* your head. trouble

E'en swinge the dogs, and thresh them *sicker!* soundly
The *mair* they squeel ay *chap* the thicker; more lay on
And still 'mang hands a hearty *bicker* beaker
O' something stout;
It gars an *owthor's* pulse beat quicker, author's
And helps his wit.

There's naething like the honest *nappy;* strong drink
Whare'll ye e'er see men *sae* happy, where will so
Or women *sonsie*, saft and *sappy*, plump juicy
'Tween morn and morn,
As them wha like to taste the *drappie*, drop drink
In glass or horn?‡

I've seen me *daez't* upon a time, dazed
I scarce could wink or see a *styme;* glimmer
Just ae *hauf-mutchkin'* does me prime, two gills
(Ought less, is little,)
Then back I rattle on the rhyme,
As *gleg's* a *whittle.* sharp as knife

---

* Dr. Taylor, of Norwich.—*R. B.*

† Mischief has accent on last syllable.—J. H.

‡ Ale was generally drunk from horn quaichs or wooden caups. Glass was reserved for whisky.—J. H.

[The person thus addressed was a noteworthy individual. His father was the miller at Craigmill, on Cessnock water, in Galston parish, where the future philosopher was born, in 1717. He showed an early aptitude for science and mechanical skill, and soon became an adept in geometry, architecture and astronomy. While yet a young man, he removed to Kilmarnock, where he carried on business, first as a cabinet-maker, and afterwards as an extensive wine and spirit merchant; but all his leisure time was devoted to his favorite scientific pursuits and mechanical contrivances. In his religious views he was originally orthodox, and joined the Antiburgher congregation at Kilmaurs; but before he was fifty years old his opinions underwent a radical change. These he carried much beyond the Arminianism of the New Light party. In 1780 he published his opinions in three 8vo volumes, printed at Glasgow, of which a second edition appeared in 1785. These essays were extensively read, and the work was popularly termed "Gowdie's Bible."

At the date of Burns' epistle to him, Goldie was 68 years old. Whether the poet introduced himself by this means or had previously known him, it is impossible to tell; but certain it is that the bard relied much on Goldie's friendship and advice during his visits to Kilmarnock while his poems were at the press. We hear nothing of Goldie, however, in the poet's prose correspondence. His son was Lieut. Goldie, R.N., who entered the navy in 1803. The old gentleman himself survived to 1811.

This poem was first published in a very imperfect form in Stewart and Meikle's Tracts, 1799. There it has only five stanzas—the third and fourth being transposed, and the four concluding ones entirely wanting. The two closing verses of the present complete copy were published by Cromek in 1808, as a stray fragment found in one of the poet's Common-place Books. Allan Cunningham avers that he had seen a copy of the first *Epistle to Lapraik*, of which they formed a part, and were introduced between the sixth and seventh verses. This may be one of Allan's hap-hazard statements.

The following variation on the fourth verse appears in the Common-place Book, and is adopted by Chambers and Gilfillan:

But now she's got an unco ripple,
Haste, gie her name up i' the chapel
Nigh unto death;
See how she fetches at the thrapple,
And gasps for breath.]

THIRD EPISTLE TO J. LAPRAIK.

(LAPRAIK'S POEMS, 1788.)

Guid speed and *furder* to you, Johnie, good prosperity
Guid health, *hale han's* an' weather bonie; whole hands
Now, when ye're nickin down fu' cannie*
The staff o' bread, †
May ye ne'er want a *stoup* o' bran'y flagon
To clear your head.

May Boreas never thresh your rigs, ‡
Nor kick your *rickles aff* their legs, ricks off
Sendin the stuff o'er muirs an' *haggs* mosses
Like drivin wrack;
But may the tapmost grain that wags
Come to the sack.

I'm *bizzie*, too, an *skelpin* at it, busy working briskly
But bitter, *daudin* showers hae *wat* it; beating wet
Sae my *auld* stumpie pen I *gat* it old got
Wi' *muckle wark*, much work
An' took my jocteleg § an' *whatt* it, cut or mended
Like ony *clark*. clerk

It's now *twa* month that I'm your debtor, two
For your *braw*, nameless, dateless letter, fine
Abusin me for harsh ill-nature
On holy men,
While deil a hair yoursel ye're better,
But mair profane.

---

* Cutting down with quiet skill.

† A Bible term for "bread, the staff of life."

‡ May the wind never thrash your ridges of ripe grain. This is a serious loss to a farmer, as the best of the grain (the "tap-pickle") is the most liable to be shaken out.—J. H.

§ Knife, so-called after Jacques de Liege, the name of a Flemish cutler. Up to the union of England and Scotland Flanders supplied Scotland with most of her cutlery.—J. H.

But let the kirk-folk ring their bells,
Let's sing about our noble *sel's:* selves
We'll cry nae *jads frae* heathen hills goddesses from
To help, or *roose* us; inspire
But *browster* wives an' whisky stills, brewer
They are the muses.

Your friendship, sir, I *winna quat* it, will not quit
An' if ye mak' objections at it,
Then hand in *neive* some day we'll knot it, fist
And witness take,
An' when wi' *usquabae** we've *wat* it whiskey wet
It winna break.

But if the *beast and branks* be spar'd horse and bridle
Till *kye* be *gaun* without the herd,† kine going
And a' the *vittel* in the yard, victual (*crop*)
And *theekit* right, thatched
I mean your *ingle-side* to guard fireside
Ae winter night. one

Then muse-inspirin *aquavitæ**
Shall mak' us *baith* sae *blythe* and witty, both cheerful
Till ye forget ye're *auld an' gatty*, old and paunchy
And be as *canty* merry
As ye were nine year less than *thretty*— thirty
Sweet ane an' twenty!

But stooks are *cowpet* wi' the blast, overturned
And now the *sinn keeks* in the west, sun peeps
Then I *maun* rin amang the rest, must
An' quat my *chanter;* bagpipe
Sae I subscribe mysel in haste,
Yours, Rab the Ranter.

Sept. 13, 1785.

---

* From Gaelic *uisge-beatha*, water of life. *Usquebaugh* is a form of the same word, and whiskey is simply a corruption of *uisge*. *Aquavitæ* is a Latin translation of usquebaugh.—J. H.

† Till the crops are off the ground and cows can go unherded.—J. H.

EPISTLE TO THE REV. JOHN M'MATH,

INCLOSING A COPY OF "HOLY WILLIE'S PRAYER," WHICH HE HAD REQUESTED, SEPT. 17, 1785.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

WHILE at the *stook* the *shearers cow'r* shock / reapers crouch
To shun the bitter *blaudin* show'r, pelting
Or in *gulravage rinnin* scowr; joyous mischief running
To pass the time,
To you I dedicate the hour
In idle rhyme.

My musie, tir'd wi' mony a sonnet
On gown, an' *ban'*, an' *douse* black band grave
bonnet,* cap
Is grown *right eerie* now she's done it, sore afraid
Lest they shou'd blame her,
An' rouse their holy thunder on it
And anathem her.

I own 'twas rash, an' rather hardy,
That I a simple, country *bardie*, bard
Shou'd meddle wi' a pack sae sturdy,
Wha, if they ken me,†
Can easy, wi' a single wordie,
Louse h—ll upon me. loose

But I *gae* mad at their grimaces, go
Their sighin, cantin, grace-proud faces,
Their three-mile prayers, an' hauf-mile graces,
Their *raxin* conscience, elastic
Whase greed, revenge, and pride disgraces
Waur nor their nonsense. worse than

---

* Tired of satirizing the clergy.—J. H.
† Know me to be the author.—J. H.

There's Gaw'n,* *misca'd waur* than a beast, miscalled / worse
Wha has mair honor in his breast
Than *mony* scores as *guid's* the priest many good as
Wha sae abused him : who so
And may a bard no crack his jest
What way they've used him? the way

See him, the poor man's friend in need, †
The gentleman in word an' deed—
An' shall his fame an' honor bleed
By worthless *skellums*, scallowags
An' not a muse erect her head
To *cowe* the *blellums?* awe blusterers

O Pope, had I thy satire's darts
To *gie* the rascals their deserts, give
I'd rip their rotten, hollow hearts,
An' tell aloud
Their jugglin hocus-pocus arts
To cheat the crowd.

God knows, I'm no the thing I shou'd be,
Nor am I even the thing I cou'd be,
But twenty times I rather would be
An atheist clean,
Than under gospel colors hid be
Just for a screen.

An honest man may *like* a glass, love
An honest man may like a lass,
But mean revenge, an' malice *fause* false
He'll still disdain,
An' then cry zeal for gospel laws,
Like some we *ken*. know

---

* Gavin Hamilton.
† This couplet was afterwards repeated, in the Dedication to Gavin Hamilton.

They take religion in their mouth;
They talk o' mercy, grace, an' truth,
For what? to gie their malice *skouth* — scope
On some *puir wight*, — poor fellow
An' hunt him down, *owre* right and ruth, — over
To ruin *streicht*. — straight

All hail, Religion! maid divine!
Pardon a muse *sae* mean as mine, — so
Who in her rough imperfect line
Thus *daurs* to name thee; — dares
To stigmatise false friends of thine
Can ne'er defame thee.

Tho' blotch't and foul wi' *mony* a stain, — many
An' far unworthy of thy train,
With trembling voice I tune my strain
To join with those
Who boldly dare thy cause maintain
In spite of foes:

In spite o' crowds, in spite o' mobs,
In spite o' undermining jobs,
In spite o' dark banditti stabs
At worth an' merit,
By scoundrels, even wi' holy robes,
But hellish spirit.

O Ayr! my dear, my native ground,
Within thy presbyterial bound
A candid liberal band is found
Of public teachers,
As men, as christians too, renown'd,
An' manly preachers.

Sir, in that circle you are nam'd;
Sir, in that circle you are fam'd;

An' some, by whom your doctrine's blam'd
(Which *gies* ye honor) gives
Even, sir, by them your heart's esteem'd,
An' winning manner.

Pardon this freedom I have *ta'en*, taken
An' if impertinent I've been,
Impute it not, good sir, in *ane* one
Whase heart ne'er wrang'd ye, whose
But to his utmost would befriend
Ought *that belang'd ye.* related to you

[The gentleman to whom the above epistle is addressed was assistant and successor to the Rev. Peter Wodrow, minister of Tarbolton, then in declining health through the infirmities of old age. "Auld Wodrow," and his young helper, M'Math, are both complimented in "The Twa Herds," as able preachers, of the liberal or "moderate" stamp. In course of years, Mr. M'Math fell into a morbid condition of mind, and eventually took to hard drinking, and died in the Isle of Mull, in 1825.

The two preceding epistles, dated within a few days of each other, specially refer to the bad harvest of 1785, which tended to discourage the poet at his farming, and perhaps to drive him to the muse for consolation. The signature to the first of these is a sobriquet borrowed from the popular song of "Maggie Lauder." Chambers tells us that in writing poems, such as the above, reflecting on the religious party to which he was opposed, Burns set at naught the earnest remonstrances of both his mother and his brother.—J. H.]

SECOND EPISTLE TO DAVIE,

A BROTHER POET.

(SILLAR'S POEMS, 1789.)

AULD NEIBOR, Old Neighbor
I'm three times doubly o'er your debtor,
For your *auld-farrant*, frien'ly letter; drolly cunning
Tho' I *maun* say't, I doubt ye flatter, must
Ye speak *sae* fair; so
For my *puir*, silly, rhymin *clatter* poor tattle
Some less *maun sair.* must serve

Hale be your heart, *hale* be your fiddle, sound
Lang may your *elbuck jink an' diddle*, elbow move merrily
To cheer you thro' the weary *widdle* maze
O' *war'ly* cares ; worldly
Till *bairns' bairns* kindly *cuddle* children's children fondle
Your auld, grey hairs.*

But Davie, lad, *I'm rede* ye're *glaikit ;* I fear thoughtless
I'm *tauld* the muse ye *hae* negleckit ; told have
An' *gif* it's sae, ye *sud* be licket if should
Until ye *fyke ;* wince
Sic *hauns* as you *sud* ne'er be *faiket*, should hands excused
Be *hain't* wha like. spared

For me, I'm on Parnassus' brink, tearing
Rivin the words to *gar* them *clink ;* make rhyme
Whyles daez't wi' love, whyles daez't sometimes dazed
wi' drink,
Wi' *jads* or *masons*,† wenches free-masons
An' whyles, but ay *owre* late, I think too
Braw sober lessons. fine

Of *a'* the thoughtless sons *o'* man, all of
Commen' me to the *bardie clan ;* poet class
Except it be some idle plan
O' rhymin clink,
The devil-*haet*—that I *sud ban*— a whit should swear
They ever think.

Nae thought, nae view, nae scheme o' livin, no
Nae cares to *gie* us joy or grievin, give
But just the *pouchie* put the *nieve* in, pocket hand
An' while ought's there,
Then, *hiltie skiltie*, we gae *scrievin*, skelter helter-careering
An' *fash nae mair.* trouble no more

---

* This verse was repeated almost verbatim in the Epistle to Major Logan.
† Burns was at this time an ardent Free-Mason.—J. H.

Leeze me on rhyme! it's ay a treasure, commend me to
My chief, *amaist* my only pleasure; almost
At hame, *a-fiel'*, at wark, or leisure, afield
The muse, poor *hizzie!* hussy
Tho' rough an' *raploch* be her measure, coarse
She's seldom lazy.

Haud to the muse, my dainty Davie: hold
The *warl'* may play you mony a *shavie;* world / shabby trick
But for the muse, she'll never leave ye,
Tho' e'er sae *puir*, poor
Na, even tho' limpin *wi'* the *spavie* not with spavin
Frae door to door. from

[If David Sillar, then a grocer in Irvine, neglected the muses at the date of this epistle (supposed to be about October, 1785), he was soon stimulated to exertion by the success of Burns' first publication, and induced to imitate him, so far as could be done, by typography and stationery. This epistle of Burns he introduced in the early pages of his book; but, in truth, it was the only valuable thing in the volume. Davie played on the violin a little: hence the reference in the second stanza.]

SONG—YOUNG PEGGY BLOOMS.

(Johnson's Museum, 1787.)

Young Peggy blooms our boniest lass,
Her blush is like the morning,
The rosy dawn, the springing grass,
With early gems adorning.
Her eyes outshine the radiant beams
That gild the passing shower,
And glitter o'er the crystal streams,
And cheer each fresh'ning flower.

Her lips, more than the cherries bright,
A richer dye has graced them;
They charm th' admiring gazer's sight,
And sweetly tempt to taste them;

Her smile is as the evening mild,
  When feather'd pairs are courting,
And little lambkins wanton wild,
  In playful bands disporting.

Were Fortune lovely Peggy's foe,
  Such sweetness would relent her;
As blooming Spring unbends the brow
  Of surly, savage Winter.
Detraction's eye no aim can gain,
  Her winning powers to lessen;
And fretful Envy grins in vain
  The poison'd tooth to fasten.

Ye Pow'rs of Honor, Love, and Truth,
  From ev'ry ill defend her!
Inspire the highly-favor'd youth
  The destinies intend her:
Still fan the sweet connubial flame
  Reponsive in each bosom;
And bless the dear parental name
  With many a filial blossom.

[Burns seems to have taken considerable pains with this fine composition, which, though highly finished, is somewhat too artificial to have been a spontaneous outburst of personal passion. The subject of it was Miss Peggy Kennedy, the daughter of a Carrick laird, and a relative of Mrs. Gavin Hamilton. The poet was introduced to her when she was on a visit to the Hamiltons. She was then a blooming young woman of seventeen, and was understood to be betrothed to McDowall, of Logan, the youthful representative of the oldest and richest family in Galloway; but, according to Chambers, "a train of circumstances lay in her path, which eventually caused the loss of her good name, and her early death." We shall again have occasion to refer to this lady as the supposed subject of another piece by Burns, "Fragment on Sensibility." The poet enclosed the present verses to Miss Kennedy in a letter, concluding thus: "That the arrows of misfortune may never reach your heart—that the snares of villany may never beset you in the road of life—that INNOCENCE may hand you by the path of HONOR to the dwelling of PEACE, is the sincere wish of him who has the honor to be," &c.]

SONG—FAREWELL TO BALLOCHMYLE.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1790.)

THE Catrine woods were yellow seen,
  The flowers decay'd on Catrine *lee*, lea
Nae *lav'rock* sang on hillock green, lark
  But nature sicken'd on the *e'e*. eye
Thro' faded groves Maria sang,
  Hersel in beauty's bloom the while; herself
And *ay* the wild-wood echoes rang, ever
  Fareweel the *braes* o' Ballochmyle! steep banks

Low in your wintry beds, ye flowers,
  Again ye'll flourish fresh and fair;
Ye birdies * dumb, in with'ring bowers,
  Again ye'll charm the vocal air.
But here, alas! for me nae mair
  Shall birdie charm, or floweret smile;
Fareweel the bonie banks of Ayr,
  Fareweel, fareweel! sweet Ballochmyle!

[This beautiful lyric was composed about the same time as the preceding song. Ballochmyle had long been the property of the Whitefoord family; but, about this period, Sir John Whitefoord's misfortunes, arising chiefly through his connections with the Ayr Bank, obliged him to sell his estates. The "Maria" of this song was Miss Whitefoord, who afterwards became Mrs. Cranstoun. The "Catrine Woods," and "Catrine Lea," are in the immediate neighborhood of Ballochmyle, and were then the property of Professor Dugald Stewart. The fine scenery there is at the distance of about two miles from Mauchline, and was a favorite haunt of Burns while he lived at Mossgiel.]

---

* Burns makes frequent use of the Scotch diminutive in *ie* with fine effect.—J. H.

FRAGMENT—HER FLOWING LOCKS.

(Cromek, 1808.)

Her flowing locks, the raven's wing,
Adown her neck and bosom *hing;* hang
How sweet unto that breast to cling,
And round that neck entwine her!

Her lips are roses *wat* wi' dew, wet
O, what a feast, her bonie *mou*! mouth
Her cheeks a *mair* celestial hue, more
A crimson still diviner!

[This little "artist's sketch" of female loveliness has no certain history attached to it. Cunningham connects it with a Mauchline incident; and, if he is right in that respect, it seems probable that our poet intended it as a portrait of Miss Whitefoord.]

HALLOWEEN.*

[Kilmarnock Ed., 1786.]

The following poem will, by many readers, be well enough understood; but for the sake of those who are unacquainted with the manners and traditions of the country where the scene is cast, notes are added, to give some account of the principal charms and spells of that night, so big with prophecy to the peasantry in the west of Scotland. The passion of prying into futurity makes a striking part of the history of human nature in its rude state, in all ages and nations; and it may be some entertainment to a philosophic mind, if any such honor the author with a perusal, to see the remains of it among the more enlightened in our own.—*R. B.*

---

* (All Hallow Eve or the eve of All Saints' Day) is thought to be a night when witches, devils, and other mischief-making beings are all abroad on their baneful, midnight errands; particularly those aerial people, the fairies, are said, on that night, to hold a grand anniversary.—*R. B.*

"Yes! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
The simple pleasures of the lowly train;
To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
One native charm, than all the gloss of art."
GOLDSMITH.

UPON that night, when fairies light
On Cassilis Downans * dance,
Or *owre* the *lays*, in splendid blaze, over leas
On sprightly coursers prance;
Or for Colean the rout is ta'en,
Beneath the moon's pale beams;
There, up the Cove,† to stray an' rove,
Amang the rocks and streams
To sport that night:

Amang the bonie winding banks,
Where Doon *rins*, *wimplin*, clear; runs meandering
Where Bruce ‡ *ance* ruled the martial ranks, once
An' shook his Carrick spear;
Some merry, friendly, country-folks
Together did convene,
To burn their *nits*, an' *pou* their *stocks*, nuts pull kale-stalks
An' *haud* their Halloween hold
Fu' blythe that night. full merry

The lasses *feat*, an' cleanly neat, trim
Mair braw than when they're fine; more attractive
Their faces blythe, fu' sweetly *kythe*, appear
Hearts *leal*, an' warm, an' *kin'*: loyal kind

---

* Certain little, romantic, rocky, green hills, in the neighborhood of the ancient seat of the Earls of Cassilis.—*R. B.*

† A noted cavern near Colean House, called the Cove of Colean; which, as well as Cassilis Downans, is famed, in the country, for being a favorite haunt of the fairies.—*R. B.*

‡ The famous family of that name, the ancestor of ROBERT, the great deliverer of his country, were Earls of Carrick.—*R. B.* Carrick is the most southern of the three divisions of Ayrshire, which are Cunningham, Kyle and Carrick.

The lads sae *trig*, wi' *wooer-babs* spruce love-knots
Weel-knotted on their *garten;* garter
Some *unco blate*, an' some wi' *gabs* exceedingly shy / chatter
Gar lasses' hearts *gang startin* make go beating
Whyles fast at night. sometimes

Then, first an' foremost, thro' the *kail*, greens
Their 'stocks'* *maun* a' be sought ance; must
They *steek* their *een*, an' *grape* an' shut eyes grope
wale choose
For *muckle* anes, an' *straught* anes, large straight
Poor *hav'rel* Will *fell aff the drift*, half-witted / went all wrong
An' wandered thro' the 'bow-kail,†
An' *pou't*, for want o' better shift, pulled
A *runt*, was like a sow-tail stalk
Sae *bow't* that night. crooked

Then, *straught* or crooked, *yird* or straight earth
nane, none
They roar an' cry a' *throw'ther;* confusedly
The vera *wee-things*, *toddlin*, *rin*, children run / totteringly
Wi' *stocks out owre* their stalks over
shouther: shoulder
An' *gif* the *custok's* sweet or sour, whether / heart of the stalk
Wi' *joctelegs*‡ they taste them; clasp-knives
Syne *cozily*, *aboon* the door, snugly above

---

* The first ceremony of Halloween is, pulling each a "stock," or plant of kail. They must go out, hand in hand, with eyes shut, and pull the first they meet with: its being big or little, straight or crooked, is prophetic of the size and shape of the grand object of all their spells—the husband or wife. If any "yird," or earth, stick to the root, that is "tocher," or fortune; and the taste of the "custoc," that is, the heart of the stem, is indicative of the natural temper and disposition. Lastly, the stems, or, to give them their proper appellation, the "runts," are placed somewhere above the head of the door; and the Christian names of people whom chance brings into the house are, according to the priority of placing the "runts," the names in question.—*R. B.*

† Cabbage. The cabbage-stalk is a miserable make-shift for the legitimate kale-runt. None but a poor "hav'rel" like Willie would ever draw a cabbage for a kale. This is another of Burns' inimitable minute touches of humor.—J. H.

‡ See note on p. 132.

Wi' *cannie* care, they've plac'd them — cunning
To lie that night.*

The lasses staw frae 'mang them a',†
To *pou* their stalks o' corn; ‡ — pull
But Rab slips out, an' *jinks* about, — dodges
Behint the *muckle* thorn: — large
He *grippet* Nelly hard an' fast; — caught
Loud *skirl'd* a' the lasses; — screamed
But her tap-pickle § *maist* was lost, — nearly
Whan *kiutlin* in the 'fause-house'‖ — fondling
Wi' him that night.

The *auld guid-wife's weel-hoordit* nits** — old mistress' well-hoarded
Are round an' round divided,
An' mony lads' an' lasses' fates
Are there that night decided:
Some kindle *couthie*, side by side, — lovingly
An' burn *thegither* trimly; — together
Some start awa wi' saucy pride,
An' jump out owre the *chimlie* — chimney
Fu' high that night.

---

* They must be placed with such care that it can be easily distinguished under whose "runt" each particular entrant next morning passes—J. H.

† The girls stole out from amongst them all.

‡ They go to the barnyard, and pull each, at three several times, a stalk of oats. If the third stalk wants the "top-pickle," that is, the grain at the top of the stalk, the party in question will come to the marriage-bed anything but a maid.—*R. B.*

§ Maidenhood. The "tap-pickle" is the most valuable grain of the ear.

‖ When the corn is in a doubtful state, by being too green or wet, the stack-builder, by means of old timber, etc., makes a large apartment in his stack, with an opening in the side which is fairest exposed to the wind: this he calls a "fause-house."—*R. B.*

** Burning the nuts is a favorite charm. They name the lad and lass to each particular nut, as they lay them in the fire; and according as they burn quietly together, or start from beside one another, the course and issue of the courtship will be.—*R. B.*

Jean slips in twa, wi' *tentie e'e;* watchful eye
  Wha 'twas, she *wadna* tell; would not
But this is *Jock*, an' this is me, Jack
  She says *in to hersel:* to herself
He *bleez'd owre* her, an' she owre him, blazed over
  As they *wad* never *mair* part; would more
Till fuff! he started up the *lum*, chimney
  And Jean had e'en a *sair* heart sore
    To see't that night.

Poor Willie, wi' his *bow-kail runt*, cabbage-stock
  Was *brunt* wi' *primsie Mallie;* burned / prudish Mary
An' Mary, nae doubt, took the *drunt*, pet
  To be compar'd to Willie:
Mall's nit *lap* out, wi' pridefu' fling leapt
  An' her *ain fit*, it *brunt* it; own foot burned
While Willie lap, an' *swoor* by 'jing,' swore
  'Twas just the way he wanted
    To be that night.

Nell had the 'fause-house' in her min',
  She *pits hersel* an' Rob in; puts herself
In loving *bleeze* they sweetly join, blaze
  Till white in *ase* they're sobbin: ashes
Nell's heart was dancin at the view;
  She whisper'd Rob to *leuk* for't: look
Rob, *stowlins*, *prie'd* her bonie stealthily tasted
    mou, mouth
  Fu' *cozie* in the *neuk* for't, snugly nook
    Unseen that night.

But *Merran* sat behint their backs, Marion
  Her thoughts on Andrew Bell;
She lea'es them gashin at their cracks,*
  An' slips out by hersel:

---

*She leaves them busily engaged in their gossip.

She thro' the yard *the nearest taks*, takes the shortest way
An' for the kiln she goes then,
An' darklins *grapet* for the '*bauks*,' groped rafters
And in the 'blue-clue'* throws then,
Right *fear't* that night. afraid

An' ay she *win't*, an' ay she *swat*, wound perspired
I *wat* she made nae *jaukin;* wot delay
Till something held within the *pat*, pot
Guid L—d! but she was quaukin!
But whether 'twas the deil himsel,
Or whether 'twas a *bauk-en'*, end of a rafter
Or whether it was Andrew Bell,
She did *na* wait on talkin not
To *spier* that night. enquire

Wee Jenny to her *graunie* says, grand-dam
"Will ye go *wi'* me, graunie? with
I'll eat the apple at the glass,†
I gat *frae* uncle Johnie:" from
She *fuff't* her pipe *wi' sic a lunt*,‡ puffed with such fury
In wrath she was sae *vap'rin*, vaporing
She notic't na an *aizle* brunt burning cinder
Her braw, new, *worset* apron worsted
Out thro' that night. through and through

"Ye little skelpie-limmer's-face!§
I *daur* you try sic sportin, dare

---

* Whoever would, with success, try this spell, must strictly observe these directions: Steal out, all alone, to the kiln, and, darkling, throw into the "pot" a clue of blue yarn; wind it in a new clue off the old one; and, towards the latter end, something will hold the thread: demand, "Wha hauds?" *i. e.*, who holds? and answer will be returned from the kiln-pot by naming the christian and surname of your future spouse.—*R. B.*

† Take a candle and go alone to a looking-glass; eat an apple before it, and some traditions say, you should comb your hair all the time; the face of your conjugal companion, *to be*, will be seen in the glass, as if peeping over your shoulder.—*R. B.*

‡ She puffed her pipe with such fury that she made its contents red hot, and an ember fell out and burned a hole in her apron.—J. H.

§ A technical term in female scolding.—*R. B.*

As seek the *foul thief ony* place, d—l any
For him to *spae* your fortune : foretell
Nae doubt but ye may *get a sight !* see something "uncanny"
Great cause ye *hae* to fear it ; have
For mony a ane has gotten a fright,
An' liv'd an' died *deleeret*, delirious
On *sic* a night. such

"Ae *hairst* afore the Sherra-moor,* harvest
I mind't as weel's *yestreen*— yester-eve
I was a *gilpey* then, I'm sure young hussy
I was *na* past fyfteen : not
The simmer had been *cauld an' wat*, cold and wet
An' *stuff* was *unco'* green ; crops uncommonly
An' ay a *rantin kirn* we *gat*, merry harvest-home got
An' just on Halloween
It fell that night.

"Our '*stibble-rig*' was Rab M'Graen, leader of the reapers
A clever, sturdy *fallow ;* fellow
His *sin* gat *Eppie* Sim wi' *wean*, son Elspeth child
That liv'd in Achmacalla :
He gat hemp-seed,† I mind it weel,
An' he made *unco* light o't ; very
But *mony* a day was *by himsel*, many out of his mind
He was *sae* sairly frighted so
That vera night."

---

* The battle of Sheriffmuir was fought between the Jacobite clans, led by the Earl of Mar, and the Royalists, led by Argyle, in 1715, on the northern slope of the Ochil hills, near Dunblane.—J. H.

† Steal out, unperceived, and sow a handful of hemp-seed, harrowing it with anything you can conveniently draw after you. Repeat, now and then—"Hemp-seed I saw thee, hemp-seed I saw thee; and him (or her) that is to be my true love, come after me and pou thee." Look over your left shoulder, and you will see the appearance of the person invoked, in the attitude of pulling hemp. Some traditions say, "Come after me and shaw thee," that is, show thyself; in which case it simply appears. Others omit the harrowing, and say, "Come after me and harrow thee."—*R. B.*

Then up gat *fechtin* Jamie Fleck, fighting
An' he *swoor* by his conscience, swore
That he could saw hemp-seed a peck;
For it was a' but nonsense:
The auld guidman *raught* down the *pock*, reached bag
An' out a handfu' *gied* him; gave
Syne bad him slip *frae* 'mang the folk, then from
Sometime when nae ane *see'd* him, observed
An' try't that night.

He marches thro' amang the *stacks*, oat-stacks
Tho' he was something *sturtin;* nervous
The *graip* he for a harrow taks, three-pronged-fork
An' *haurls* at his *curpin:* drags rear
And ev'ry now an' then, he says,
"Hemp-seed I *saw* thee, sow
An' her that is to be my lass
Come after me, an' draw thee
As fast this night."

He whistl'd up 'Lord Lenox' March,'*
To keep his courage cheery;
Altho' his hair began to arch,
He was sae *fley'd* an' *eerie:* frightened dismal
Till presently he hears a squeak,
An' then a *grane* an' *gruntle;* groan grunt
He *by* his shouther *gae a keek*, over gave a peep
An' tumbled wi' a *wintle* reel
Out-owre that night. right over

He roar'd a horrid murder-shout,
In dreadfu' desperation!
An' young an' auld come *rinnin* out, running
An' hear the sad narration:

* A popular Scotch tune.

He *swoor* 'twas *hilchin* Jean M'Craw, swore limping
Or *crouchie Merran* Humphie— crook-backed Marion
Till stop! she trotted thro' them a';
An' wha was it but *grumphie* the pig
Asteer that night? stirring

Meg fain *wad* to the barn *gaen*, Margaret would have gone
To *winn* three wechts o' naething; * winnow
But for to meet the deil *her lane*, by herself
She *pat but little faith in:* had not much heart for
She gies the *herd* a *pickle* nits, cow-herd few
An' *twa* red cheekit apples, two
To watch, while for the barn she sets,
In hopes to see *Tam* Kipples Tom
That vera night.

She turns the key wi' *cannie thraw*, cautious twist
An' *owre* the threshold ventures; over
But first on *Sawnie* gies a *ca'*, Alexander call
Syne *bauldly* in she enters: boldly
A *ratton* rattl'd up the *wa'*, rat wall
An' she cry'd, L—d preserve her!
An' ran thro' *midden-hole* an' a', dung-pit
An' pray'd wi' zeal and fervor,
Fu' fast that night. full

They *hoy't* out Will, wi' *sair* advice; urged much
They *hecht* him some fine *braw ane*; promised pretty girl

* This charm must likewise be performed unperceived and alone. You go to the barn, and open both doors, taking them off the hinges, if possible; for there is danger that the being about to appear may shut the doors, and do you some mischief. Then take that instrument used in winnowing the corn, which in our country dialect we call a "wecht," and go through all the attitudes of letting down corn against the wind. Repeat it three times, and the third time an apparition will pass through the barn, in at the windy door, and out at the other, having both the figure in question, and the appearance or retinue, marking the employment or station in life.—*R. B.* (A wecht is like a riddle, only having leather in place of wire. A small wecht resembles a drum-head.—J. H.)

It chanc'd the stack he *faddom't* thrice,* fathomed
Was timmer-propt for thrawin : †
He taks a *swirlie* auld moss-oak crooked
For some black, *grousome carlin ;* ugly old woman
An' *loot a winze*, an' drew a stroke, uttered an imprecation
Till skin in *blypes* cam *haurlin* large pieces stripping
Aff's nieves that night. off his fists

A wanton widow *Leezie* was, Elizabeth
As *cantie* as a *kittlen ;* playful kitten
But och ! that night, amang the *shaws*, trees
She gat a fearfu' *settlin !* setting down
She thro' the whins, an' by the *cairn*, heap of stones
An' owre the hill gaed *scrievin ;* careering
Whare three *lairds' lan's* met at a burn,‡ land-owners' estates
To dip her left *sark-sleeve* in, shirt-sleeve
Was bent that night.

Whyles owre a *linn* the burnie plays, sometimes cascade
As thro' the glen it *wimpl't ;* meandered
Whyles round a rocky *scaur* it strays, bluff
Whyles in a *wiel* it dimpl't ; eddy
Whyles glitter'd to the nightly rays,
Wi' *bickerin*, dancin dazzle ; hurrying
Whyles *cookit* ‡ underneath the braes, coquetted
Below the spreading hazle
Unseen that night.

---

* Take an opportunity of going unnoticed to a "bear-stack," and fathom it three times round. The last fathom of the last time, you will catch in your arms the appearance of your future conjugal yoke-fellow.—*R. B.*

† Propped up by timber to keep it erect, or from throwing.—J. H.

‡ You go out, one or more (for this is a social spell), to a south running spring, or rivulet, where "three lairds' lands meet," and dip your left shirt-sleeve. Go to bed in sight of a fire, and hang your wet sleeve before it to dry. Lie awake, and, some time near midnight, an apparition, having the exact figure of the grand object in question, will come and turn the sleeve, as if to dry the other side of it.—*R. B.*

Amang the *brachens*, on the *brae*, ferns knoll
Between her an' the moon,
The deil, or else an *outler quey*, outlying heifer
Gat up an' *ga'e* a *croon:* gave low
Poor Leezie's heart maist *lap the hool;* leapt from its case
Near *lav'rock-height* she jumpet, lark-high
But *mist a fit, an'* in the pool missed a foot and
Out-owre the *lugs* she plumpet, ears
Wi' a plunge that night.

In order, on the clean hearth-stane,
The 'luggies' * three are ranged;
An' ev'ry time great care is *ta'en* taken
To see them duly changed:
Auld uncle John, *wha* wedlock's joys old who
Sin' 'Mar's-year' † did desire,
Because he gat the *toom* dish thrice, empty
He heav'd them on the fire,
In wrath that night.

Wi' merry sangs, an' friendly cracks,
I *wat* they did *na* weary; wot not
And *unco* tales, an' funnie jokes— strange mysterious
Their sports were cheap an' *cheery:* cheerful
Till butter'd *sow'ns*, ‡ wi' fragrant fine meal porridge
lunt, steam
Set a' their *gabs a-steerin;* mouths agoing

---

* Take three dishes, put clean water in one, foul water in another, and leave the third empty; blindfold a person, and lead him to the hearth where the dishes are ranged; he (or she) dips the left hand: if by chance in the clean water, the future (husband or) wife will come to the bar of matrimony a maid; if in the foul, a widow; if in the empty dish, it foretells, with equal certainty, no marriage at all. It is repeated three times, and every time the arrangement of the dishes is altered.—*R. B.* (Luggies are wooden mugs with ear-shaped handles. —J. H.)

† 1715, when the Earl of Mar headed an insurrection. See note on *Sherramuir*, at Stanza 13.

‡ Sowens, with butter instead of milk to them, is always the Halloween Supper.—*R. B.*

Syne, wi' a social glass o' *strunt*, then spirits
They parted aff careerin
Fu' blythe that night.

[The author's own notes to this long descriptive poem are so complete, that we require to add very little to the information they contain. The poet has selected, as the scene of those old customs and superstitious ceremonies, not the locality of his riper years, but that of his infancy and boyhood. Both in Alloway and at Mount Oliphant, he lived in the close neighborhood of Colzean and Cassilis Downans. (Many of the ceremonies appropriate to Halloween have now fallen into disuse. Meetings of young people still take place, both in town and country; but their frolics are usually limited to ducking for apples in tubs of water, burning nuts, the lottery of the "luggies," and pulling kale-stalks. —J. H.)

In the sixteenth stanza, the mention of a place is introduced, which the poet names "Achmacalla." We believe there is no such locality in Carrick, or even in Ayrshire; the rhyme required it, and the name was coined accordingly. The fourth stanza from the close of the poem is generally quoted as the finest descriptive passage, within small compass, to be found in poesy. Respecting this production, Mr. Lockhart says,—"Hallowe'en, a descriptive poem, perhaps even more exquisitely wrought than the 'Holy Fair,' and containing nothing that could offend the feelings of anybody, was produced about the same period. Burns' art had now reached its climax."]

TO A MOUSE,

ON TURNING HER UP IN HER NEST WITH THE PLOUGH NOVEMBER, 1785.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

WEE, *sleeket*, *cowrin*, tim'rous beastie, sleek crouching
O, what a panic's in thy breastie!
Thou need na start awa sae hasty,
Wi' *bickerin brattle!* scurrying scamper
I wad be *laith* to rin an' chase thee, loath
Wi' murderin' pattle! *

*An implement for clearing the plow of clods, etc.—J. H.

I'm truly sorry man's dominion,
Has broken nature's social union,
An' justifies that ill opinion,
Which makes thee startle
At me, thy poor earth-born companion,
An' fellow-mortal!

I doubt na, *whyles*, but thou may thieve; on occasions
What then? poor beastie, thou *maun* live! must
A daimen icker in a *thrave* * twenty-four sheaves
'S a *sma'* request; small
I'll get a blessin wi' the *lave*, rest
An' never miss't!

Thy *wee bit housie*,† too, in ruin! tiny little house
It's silly *wa's* the *win's* are strewin! walls winds
An' naething, now, to *big* a new *ane*, build one
O' *foggage* green! soft, moss-like vegetation
An' bleak December's winds ensuin,
Baith *snell* an' keen! biting

Thou saw the fields laid bare an' waste,
An' weary winter comin fast,
An' *cozie* here, beneath the blast, snugly comfortable
Thou thought to dwell—
Till crash! the cruel *coulter* past ploughshare
Out thro' thy cell.

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' *stibble*, stubble
Has cost thee mony a weary nibble!
Now thou's turn'd out, for a' thy trouble,
But house or *hald*, without hold
To *thole* the winter's sleety dribble, endure
An' *cranreuch cauld!* hoar-frost cold

---

* An occasional ear in a large shock.—J. H.

† Note here the extreme felicity of the piled-up diminutives, adjectival and terminational. The ending *ie* is the common Scotch diminutive; *oc* or *ock* is also common in Ayrshire, as *Hughoc*, little Hugh, *lassock*, a little lass.—J. H.

But Mousie, thou art no *thy lane*, alone
In proving foresight may be vain;
The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men
Gang aft agley,* oft miscarry
An' *lea'e* us nought but grief and pain, leave
For promised joy!

Still thou art blest, compar'd wi' me!
The present only toucheth thee:
But och! I backward cast my *e'e*, eye
On prospects drear!
An' forward, tho' I canna see,
I guess an' fear!

[We have no variations to note here. The poem seems to have issued perfect from the mint of the author's mind, when he suddenly stopped the ploughshare's farther progress on observing the tiny creature escape across the rig. This is generally regarded as one of the most faultless of the author's productions, and unmatched even by the "Mountain Daisy" in originality and interest. "It is difficult to decide (writes Currie) whether this 'Address' should be considered as serious or comic. If we smile at the 'bickering brattle' of this little flying animal, it is a smile of tenderness and pity. The descriptive part is admirable; the moral reflections beautiful, arising directly out of the occasion; and in the conclusion there is a deep melancholy, a sentiment of doubt and dread that rises to the sublime."]

(Burns ploughed with four horses, and required a "gadsman" to assist in driving, while he held the plough. John Blane, who acted as "gadsman" on this occasion, Chambers tells us, survived Burns sixty years, and had a distinct recollection of turning up the mouse. Boy-like, he ran after the creature to kill it, but was checked and recalled by his master, who, he observed, became thereafter thoughtful and abstracted. Burns soon after read the poem to Blane.—J. H.)

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*Few, if any, of Burns' inimitably terse and pithy aphorisms have been so frequently quoted as this. Fraught with wit and wisdom, it has become proverbial wherever the English language is known.—J. H.

EPITAPH ON JOHN DOVE, INNKEEPER.

(STEWART AND MEIKLE'S TRACTS, 1799.)

HERE lies Johnie Pigeon;
What was his religion
  Whaever desires to *ken*, whoever know
To some other *warl'* world
Maun follow the *carl*, must fellow
  For here Johnie Pigeon had *nane*! none

Strong ale was ablution—
Small beer—persecution,
  A dram was "*memento mori!*"
But a full-flowing bowl
Was the saving his soul,
  And port was celestial glory.

[The only variation to be noted here is in the last line but one: Chambers has "the joy of his soul;" but the change is no improvement, whatever the authority for it. John Dove, or more familiarly, "Johnie Doo," was mine host of the Whitefoord Arms Inn at Mauchline, in the main street, opposite the church, at the corner of a cross street, named Cowgate. If we mistake not, he was the "Paisley John" of another poem by Burns, which would indicate that he originally hailed from that town. We have Gilbert Burns' authority for believing that the poet never frequented public houses till he had almost formed the resolution to become an author. Certain it is, before the close of the year 1785, Burns was the leading member of a bachelor's club of a very odd character, which held stated meetings at the "Whitefoord Arms." It was a kind of secret association, the professed object of which was to search out, report, and discuss the merits and demerits of the many scandals that cropped up from time to time in the village. The poet was made perpetual president; John Richmond, a clerk with Gavin Hamilton, writer, was appointed "Clerk of Court"—for they dignified the mock solemnity of their meetings by adopting judicial styles and forms;—James Smith, a draper in the village, was named "procurator fiscal," and to William Hunter, shoemaker—"weel skill'd in dead and living leather"—was assigned the office of "messenger-at-arms." Having premised thus much concerning this club of rare fellows, we refer the reader to page 400 for the "Court of Equity."]

EPITAPH FOR JAMES SMITH.

(STEWART, 1801.)

LAMENT him, Mauchline husbands *a'*, all
He *aften* did assist ye; often
For had ye staid *hale* weeks awa, whole
Your wives they *ne'er* had miss'd ye. never

Ye Mauchline *bairns*, as on ye press children
To school in bands *thegither*, together
O tread ye lightly on his grass,—
Perhaps he was your father!

[In the above lampoon upon "fiscal Smith," and libel on the matrons of Mauchline, we see the nature of the "cases" that were usually brought before the solemn "Court" assembled in the Whitefoord Arms. The poet, in his fine "Epistle to J. S.," describes his friend as of "*scrimpet* stature," but of scanty manly configuration and character.]

ADAM ARMOUR'S PRAYER.

(HOGG AND MOTHERWELL'S ED., 1834.)

GUDE pity me, because I'm little! G–d
For though I am an elf o' mettle,
An' can, like *ony wabster's* shuttle, any weaver's
Jink there or here, move nimbly
Yet, scarce as *lang's* a gude *kail-whittle*, tall / kale-knife
I'm *unco* queer. uncommon

An' now Thou kens our woefu' case;
For Geordie's "*jurr*" we're in disgrace, journey-woman

Because we "stang'd" * her through the place,
An' hurt her *spleuchan;* purse of skin
For *whilk* we *daurna* show our face which dare not
Within the *clachan.* village

An' now we're *dernd* in dens and hollows, lying hid
And hunted, as was William Wallace,
Wi' constables—*thae* blackguard fallows— these
An' *sodgers baith;* soldiers also
But Gude preserve us *frae* the gallows, from
That shamefu' death!

Auld grim black-bearded Geordie's *sel'* — self
O shake him *owre* the mouth o' hell! over
There let him *hing*, an' roar, an' yell hang
Wi' hideous *din*, noise
And if he offers to rebel,
Then heave him in.

When Death comes in wi' glimmerin *blink*, glance
An' tips auld *drucken Nanse*† the wink, drunken Nancy
May Sautan gie her *doup* a *clink* bottom hasty set-down
Within his *yett*, gate
An fill her up wi' brimstone drink,
Red-reekin *het.* hot

Though *Jock* an' *hav'rel* Jean ‡ are merry— Jack half-witted
Some devil seize them in a hurry,
An' waft them in th' infernal wherry
Straught through the lake, straight
An' *gie* their hides a noble curry give
Wi' oil of aik! §

---

* "Riding the stang" was a kind of lynch law, executed against obnoxious persons, by carrying them shoulder-high through the village astride a rail.—J. H

† Geordie's wife. ‡ Geordie's son and daughter.

§ Curry their hides with an oak-stick.—J. H.

As for the "jurr"—*puir* worthless body! poor
She's got mischief enough already;
Wi' *stanget* hips, and buttocks bluidy, stang-ridden
She's suffer'd sair;
But may she wintle in a woody, *
If she wh—e mair!

[This very free production was first printed in the Edinburgh Magazine of January, 1808. Although the poem may not be entitled to rank with the author's higher efforts in the same style, yet few readers will be inclined to dispute that it fairly establishes its own paternity. It is certainly one of a group of hasty comic effusions dashed off by Burns at this period in connection with the Whitefoord Arms conventions already spoken of. The parents of Jean Armour lived at the back of the Inn; but Adam Armour, who is the subject of the present poem, was in no way related to her. The "Geordie" of the piece was another Mauchline innkeeper, whose "jurr," or female servant, had committed some sexual error that caused a kind of "hue and cry" against her among the neighbors. Thus encouraged, a band of reckless young fellows, with Adam Armour for a ringleader, "rade the stang" upon the poor sinner. Geordie, who sympathised with his "jurr," resented this lawless outrage, and got criminal proceedings raised against the perpetrators. Adam Armour, who was an ill-made little fellow of some determination, had to abscond, and during his wanderings he happened to fall in with Burns, who, after commiserating the little outlaw, conceived the "Prayer" here put into his lips.]

THE JOLLY BEGGARS: A CANTATA.

(STEWART AND MEIKLE'S TRACTS, 1799.)

Recitativo.

WHEN *lyart* leaves bestrow the *yird*, withered earth
Or wavering like the bauckie-bird,†
Bedim cauld Boreas' blast;
When hailstanes drive wi' bitter *skyte*, slanting stroke

* Wriggle in a halter, properly in a halter made of withes.—J. H.
† The old Scotch name for the bat.—*R. B.*

And infant frosts begin to bite,
  In hoary *cranreuch* drest; hoar-frost
Ae night at e'en a merry *core* party
  O' *randie*, *gangrel bodies*, reckless vagrant folks
In Poosie-Nansie's held the *splore*, carousal
  To drink their *orra duddies*: superflous rags
    Wi' quaffing and laughing,
      They *ranted* an' they sang, frolicked noisily
    Wi' jumping an' thumping,
      The vera girdle * rang.

First, *niest* the fire, in *auld* red rags, next old
Ane sat, weel brac'd wi' mealy bags,†
  And knapsack a' in order;
His *doxy* lay within his arm; mistress
Wi' *usquebae* an' blankets warm whisky
  She *blinket* on her sodger: looked amorously
An' ay he gies the *tozie* drab fuddled
  The *tither skelpin* kiss, other noisy
While she held up her greedy *gab*, mouth
  Just like an aumous dish:‡
    Ilk smack still did crack still,
      Just like a cadger's § whip;
    Then staggering an' swaggering,
      He roar'd this ditty up—

---

* A circular iron plate used in Scotland for baking oat-meal cakes and "scones" on over the fire; a griddle. It is by no means sonorous; so from its ringing one may judge of the riotous character of the "splore."—J. H.

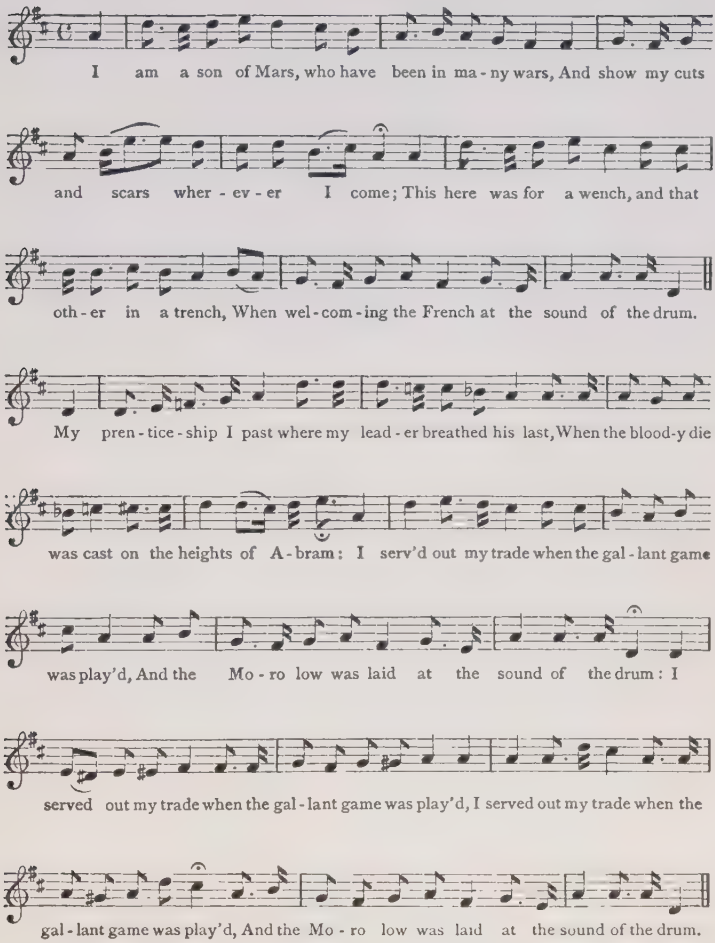
† See note following.

‡ Alms-dish: the Scottish beggars used to carry a large wooden dish for the reception of such alms as they received in the form of cooked food. They still more commonly carried a bag, called a meal-poke, to contain the handfuls of oat-meal which was given them in place of money.—J. H.

§ The cadger was a hawker, who travelled the country with a horse or ass, carrying two panniers loaded with merchandise. The term came to be applied to any one who drove a cart regularly for hire; as, a *coal-cadger*.—J. H.

THE JOLLY BEGGARS—"I am a son of Mars who have been in many wars."

AIR.



Tune.—"Soldier's Joy."

I am a son of Mars who have been in many wars,
And show my cuts and scars wherever I come;
This here was for a wench, and that other in a trench,
When welcoming the French at the sound of the drum.
Lal de daudle, &c.

My prenticeship I past where my leader breath'd his last,
When the bloody die was cast on the heights of Abram : *
And I servèd out my trade when the gallant game was play'd,
And the Moro † low was laid at the sound of the drum.

I lastly was with Curtis among the floating batt'ries, ‡
And there I left for witness an arm and a limb ;
Yet let my country need me, with Elliot § to lead me,
I'd clatter on my stumps at the sound of a drum.

And now tho' I must beg, with a wooden arm and leg,
And many a tatter'd rag hanging over my bum,
I'm as happy with my wallet, my bottle and my *callet*, trull
As when I used in scarlet to follow a drum.

What tho', with hoary locks, I must stand the winter shocks,
Beneath the woods and rocks, oftentimes for a home,
When the tother bag I sell, ‖ and the tother bottle tell,
I could meet a troop of hell, at the sound of a drum.

---

* The battle-ground in front of Quebec, where Wolfe victoriously fell in September, 1759.

† El Moro was the castle that defended the harbor of Santiago, a small island near the southern coast of Cuba. It was taken by the British in 1762, after which Havanna surrendered.—J. H.

‡ The destruction of the famous Spanish floating batteries, during the famous siege in 1782, on which occasion Captain Curtis signalized himself.

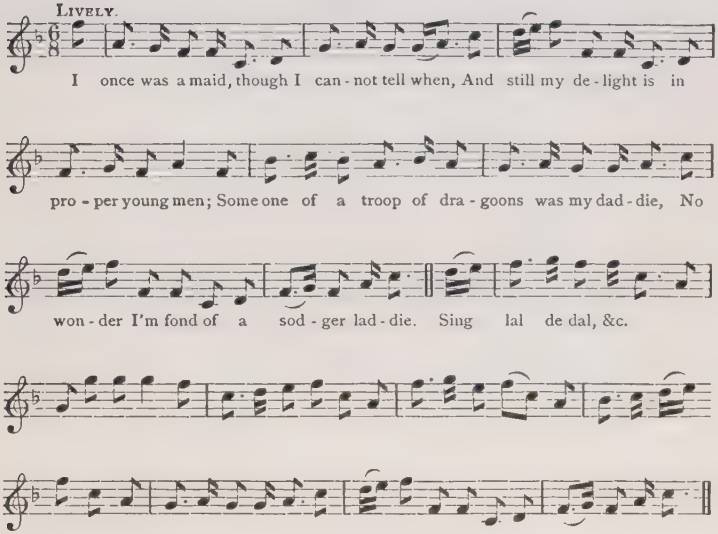
§ G. A. Elliot (Lord Heathfield), who defended Gibraltar during a siege of three years.

‖ Bag of oatmeal collected by begging and sold for whisky.—J. H.

Recitativo.

He ended ; and the *kebars sheuk*, rafters shook
  Aboon the chorus roar ; above
While frightened *rattons* backward *leuk*, rats look
  An' seek the *benmost bore :* innermost hole
A fairy fiddler frae the *neuk*, nook
  He skirl'd out, encore !
But up arose the martial *chuck*, hen
  An' laid the loud uproar.

AIR.



Tune.—"Sodger Laddie."

I once was a maid, tho' I cannot tell when,
And still my delight is in proper young men :
Some one of a troop of dragoons was my daddie,
No wonder I'm fond of a sodger laddie.
  Sing, lal de dal, &c.

The first of my loves was a swaggering blade.
To rattle the thundering drum was his trade ;

His leg was so tight, and his cheek was so ruddy,
Transported I was with my sodger laddie.

But the godly old chaplain left him in the lurch;
The sword I forsook for the sake of the church:
He ventur'd the soul, and I *risket* the body, risked
'Twas then I prov'd false to my sodger laddie.

Full soon I grew sick of my sanctified sot,
The regiment at large for a husband I got;
From the gilded spontoon to the fife I was ready,
I askèd no more but a sodger laddie.

But the peace it reduc'd me to beg in despair,
Till I met my old boy in a Cunningham * fair;
His rags regimental they flutter'd so gaudy,
My heart it rejoic'd at a sodger laddie.

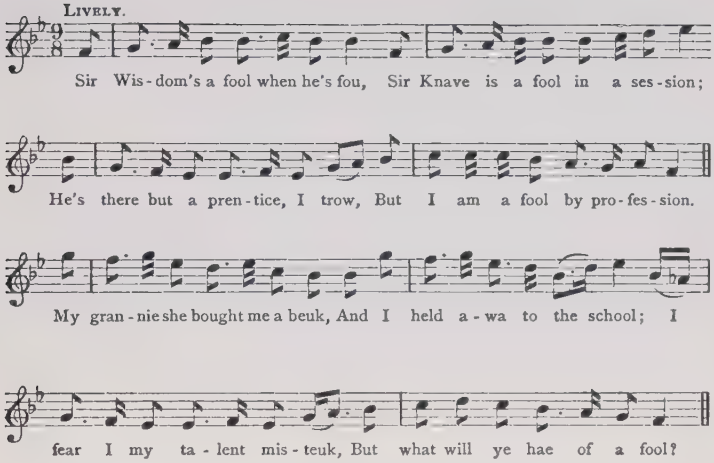
And now I have liv'd—I know not how long,
And still I can join in a cup and a song;
But whilst with both hands I can hold the glass steady,
Here's to thee, my hero, my sodger laddie.

Recitativo.

[Poor Merry-Andrew, in the *neuk*, corner
Sat guzzling wi' a *tinkler-hizzie;* tinker wench
They mind't na wha the chorus *teuk* took
Between themselves they were sae busy:
At length, wi' drink an' courtin dizzy,
He *stoiter'd* up an' made a face; staggered
Then turn'd, an' laid a *smack* on *Grizzie*, kiss Grace
Syne tun'd his pipes wi' grave grimace.

* Cunningham fair was held at Stewarton, near Kilmarnock.

AIR.



Tune—"Auld Sir Symon."

Sir Wisdom's a fool when he's *fou;* full (*drunk*)
  Sir Knave is a fool in a session;*
He's there but a prentice I trow,
  But I am a fool by profession.

My *grannie* she bought me a *beuk*, grand-dam / book
  An' I held awa to the school;
I fear I my talent *misteuk*, mistook
  But what will ye *hae* of a fool? have

For drink I would venture my neck;
  A *hizzie's* the half of my craft; wench
But what could ye other expect,
  Of ane that's avowedly *daft?* crazy

I ance was tyed up like a *stirk*,† yearling steer
  For civilly swearing and quaffing;

---

* Apparently, when being tried for some offence.

† This refers to the punishment of the "Jougs," an iron collar padlocked round a culprit's neck in a public thoroughfare.

I ance was abus'd *i'* the kirk, in
For *touzling* a lass i' my *daffin.* rumpling / frolicsomeness

Poor Andrew that tumbles for sport,
Let naebody name wi' a jeer;
There's even, I'm *tauld*, i' the Court told
A tumbler ca'd the Premier.

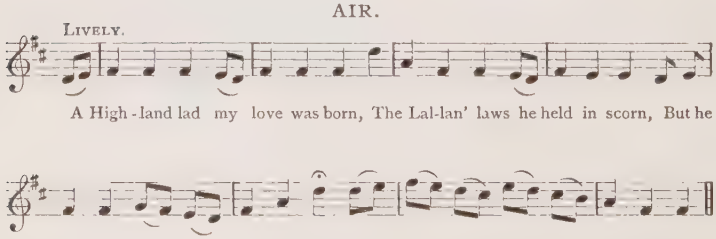
Observ'd ye yon reverend lad
Mak faces to tickle the mob;
He rails at our mountebank squad,—
It's rivalship just i' the job.

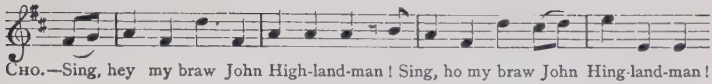
And now my conclusion I'll tell,
For faith I'm confoundedly dry;
The chiel that's a fool for himsel,
Guid L—d! he's far dafter than I.]

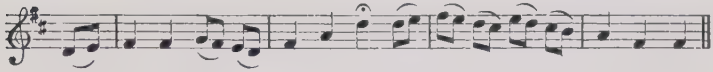
Recitativo.

Then niest outspak a *raucle carlin* stout beldam
Wha kent fu' weel to *cleek* the sterlin; clutch (*steal*)
For mony a pursie she had hookèd,
An' had in mony a well been *doukèd:* ducked
Her love had been a Highland laddie,
But weary fa' the waefu' *woodie;* gibbet-halter
Wi' sighs an' sobs she thus began
To wail her *braw* John Highlandman. brave

AIR.







Tune.—"O an ye were dead, Guidman."

A Highland lad my love was born,
The *lalland* laws he held in scorn; lowland
But he still was faithfu' to his clan,
My gallant, braw John Highlandman.

Chorus.

Sing hey my braw John Highlandman!
Sing ho my braw John Highlandman!
There's not a lad in a' the lan'
Was match for my John Highlandman.

With his *philibeg* an' tartan plaid, kilt
An' guid *claymore* down by his side, broadsword
The ladies' hearts he did trepan,
My gallant, braw John Highlandman.
Sing hey, &c.

We rangèd a' from Tweed to Spey,*
An' liv'd like lords an' ladies gay;
For a *lalland* face he fearèd none,— lowland
My gallant, braw John Highlandman.
Sing hey, &c.

They banish'd him beyond the sea,
But ere the bud was on the tree,
Adown my cheeks the pearls ran,
Embracing my John Highlandman.
Sing hey, &c.

---

* Tweed separates Scotland from England; Spey is a river in Inverness-shire. The phrase means from South to North of Scotland.—J. H.

But, och! they catch'd him at the last,
And bound him in a dungeon fast:
My curse upon them every one,
They've hanged my braw John Highlandman!
Sing hey, &c.

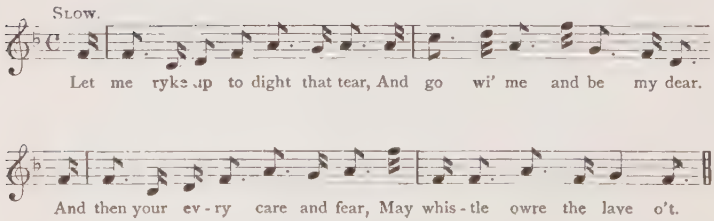
And now a widow I must mourn
The pleasures that will ne'er return;
No comfort but a hearty can,
When I think on John Highlandman.
Sing hey, &c.

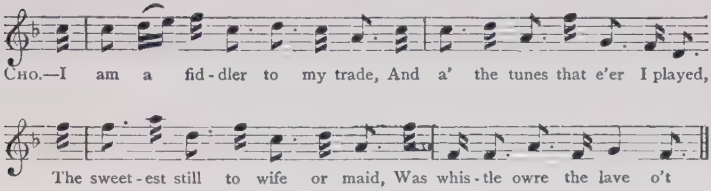
Recitativo.

A pigmy scraper wi' his fiddle,
Wha us'd at *trystes* an' fairs to *driddle*, cattle markets / play
Her strappin limb and *gausy* middle buxom
(He reach'd nae higher)
Had holed his heartie like a riddle,
An' *blawn't* on fire. blown it

Wi' hand on *hainch*, and upward e'e, haunch
He *croon'd* his gamut, one, two three, hummed
Then in an arioso key,
The wee Apollo
Set off wi' allegretto glee
His giga solo.

AIR.





Tune—"Whistle owre the lave o't."

Let me *ryke* up to *dight* that tear — reach, wipe
An' go wi' me an' be my dear;
An' then your every care an' fear
May whistle owre the *lave o't.** — rest of it

Chorus.

I am a fiddler to my trade,
An' a' the tunes that e'er I play'd,
The sweetest still to wife or maid,
Was whistle owre the lave o't.

At *kirns* an' weddins *we'se* be there — harvest-homes, we shall
An' O sae nicely's we will fare!
We'll *bowse* about till Daddie Care — carouse
Sing whistle owre the lave o't.
I am, &c.

Sae merrily's the *banes* we'll *pyke*, — bones, pick
An' sun oursells about the *dyke;* — earth or stone fence
An' at our leisure, when ye like,
We'll whistle owre the lave o't.
I am, &c.

But bless me wi' your heav'n o' charms,
An' while I kittle hair on thairms,†
Hunger, *cauld*, an' a' sic harms, — cold
May whistle owre the lave o't.
I am, &c.

---

* A popular Scotch air. His meaning is: grant my prayer, and then you can regard all else with indifference.—J. H.

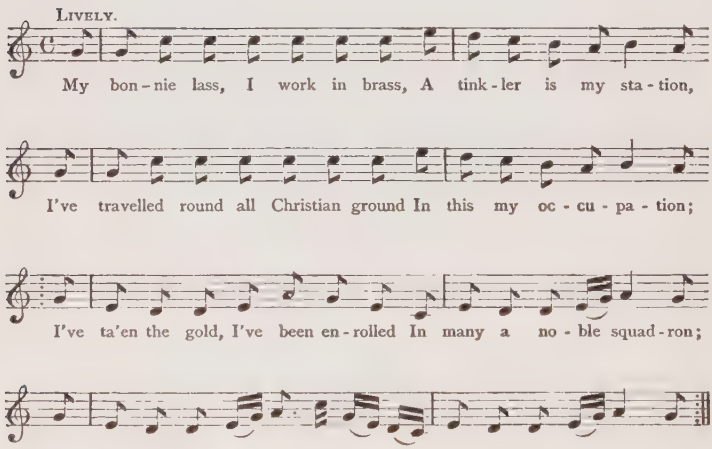
† Tickle the horse-hair of the bow on catgut.

Recitativo.

Her charms had struck a sturdy caird,*
  As weel as poor gut-scraper;
He taks the fiddler by the beard,
  An' draws a *roosty* rapier— rusty
He *swoor* by *a'* was swearing worth, swore all
  To speet him like a *pliver*, plover for roasting
Unless he would from that time forth
  Relinquish her for ever.

Wi' ghastly *e'e*, poor tweedle-dee eye
  Upon his *hunkers* bended haunches
An' pray'd for grace wi' ruefu' face,
  An' so the quarrel ended.
But tho' his little heart did grieve
  When round the tinkler prest her,
He feign'd to *snirtle* in his sleeve, laugh furtively
  When thus the caird address'd her:

AIR.



* Cairds were travelling tinkers or horn spoon-makers, and generally gipsies and thieves.—J. H.

Tune—"Clout the Cauldron."

My bonie lass, I work in brass,
  A tinkler is my station;
I've travel'd round all Christian ground
  In this my occupation;
I've *taen* the gold, an' been enrolled — taken
  In many a noble squadron; *
But vain they search'd when off I march'd
  To go an' *clout* the cauldron. — patch
    I've taen the gold, &c.

Despise that shrimp, that wither'd imp.
  With a' his noise an' cap'rin;
An' take a share with those that bear
  The *budget* and the apron! — tool-bag
And by that *stowp!* my faith an' *houp* — flagon — hope
  And by that dear Kilbagie,†
If e'er ye want, or meet wi' *scant*, — short commons
  May I ne'er weet my *craigie*. — throat
    And by that stowp, &c.

Recitativo.

The caird prevail'd—th' unblushing fair
  In his embraces sunk;
Partly wi' love o'ercome *sae sair*, — so sor-
  An' partly she was drunk:
Sir Violino, with an air
  That show'd a man o' *spunk*, — mettle
Wish'd unison between the pair,
  An' made the bottle clunk ‡
    To their health that night.

---

* He was a bounty-jumper.—J. H.

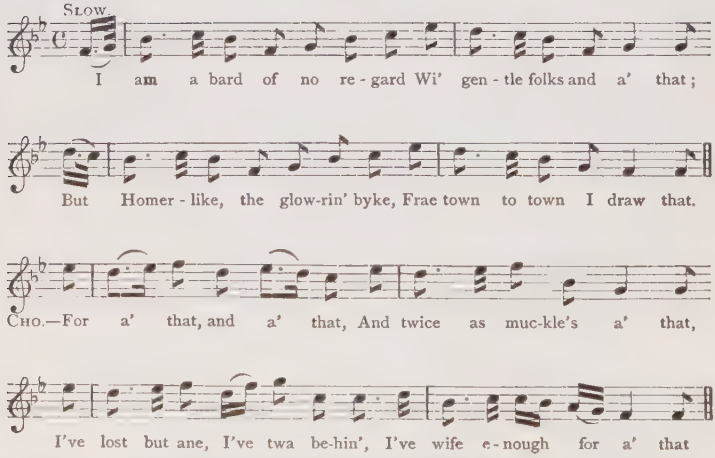
† A peculiar sort of whisky so called, a great favorite with Poosie Nansie's clubs.—*R. B.* So named from Kilbagie distillery, in Clackmannan-shire.

‡ Onomatopoetic, for the gurgling sound made in pouring out liquor.—J. H.

But *hurchin* Cupid shot a shaft, urchin
  That play'd a dame a *shavie*— trick
The fiddler rak'd her, fore and aft,
  Behint the *chicken cavie*. hen coop
Her lord, a wight of Homer's craft,*
  Tho' limpin wi' the *spavie*, spavin
He *hirpl'd* up, an' lap *like daft* limped as if crazy
  An' *shor'd* them Dainty Davie † sang
    O' boot that night. to boot

He was a care-defying blade
  As ever Bacchus listed !
Tho' Fortune *sair* upon him laid sore
  His heart, she ever miss'd it.
He had no wish but—to be glad,
  Nor want but—when he thristed ;
He hated nought but—to be sad,
  An' thus the muse suggested
    His sang that night.

AIR.



* Homer is allowed to be the oldest ballad-singer on record.—*R. B.*
† A popular Scotch air and song.

Tune.—"For a' that, an' a' that."

I am a Bard of no regard,
  Wi' gentle folks an' a' that;
But Homer-like, the *glowrin byke*, staring throng
  Frae town to town I draw that. from

Chorus.

For a' that an' a' that,
  An' twice as *muckle's* a' that; much
I've lost but ane, I've twa behin',
  I've wife eneugh for a' that.

I never drank the Muses' *stank*, pool or fountain
  Castalia's burn, an' a' that:
But there it streams an' richly reams,
  My Helicon I ca' that.*
For a' that, &c.

Great love I bear to a' the fair,
  Their humble slave an' a' that;
But lordly will, I hold it still
  A mortal sin to *thraw* that. thwart
For a' that, &c.

In raptures sweet, this hour we meet,
  Wi' mutual love and' a' that;
But for how lang the *flie may stang* fancy may last
  Let inclination law that.
For a' that, &c.

Their tricks an' craft hae put me *daft*, crazy
  They've *taen* me in, an' a' that; taken
But clear your decks, an' here's the Sex!
  I like the *jads* for a' that. jades

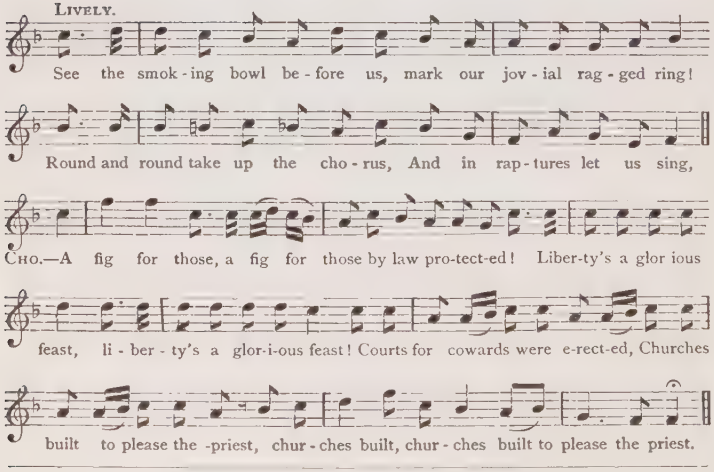
* We must here imagine the singer to pour out his beer with jovial *abandon*.—J. H.

For a' that an' a' that,
An' twice as muckle's a' that;
My dearest bluid, to do them guid,
They're welcome till't for a' that.

Recitativo.

So sung the bard—and Nansies *wa's* walls
Shook with a thunder of applause,
Re-echo'd from each mouth!
They toom'd their pocks,* they pawn'd their *duds* rags of clothing
They scarcely left to *coor* their *fuds*, cover hips
To quench their *lowin* drouth: flaming
Then *owre again*, the jovial thrang once more
The poet did request
To *lowse* his pack an' *wale* a sang; loose choose
A ballad o' the best:
He rising, rejoicing,
Between his twa Deborahs,
Looks round him, an' found them
Impatient for the chorus.

AIR.



* Emptied their meal-bags for drink.—J. H.

Tune.—"Jolly Mortals fill your Glasses."

See the smoking bowl before us,
  Mark our jovial, ragged ring!
Round and round take up the chorus,
  And in raptures let us sing—

Chorus.

  A fig for those by law protected!
    Liberty's a glorious feast!
  Courts for cowards were erected,
    Churches built to please the priest.

What is title, what is treasure,
  What is reputation's care?
If we lead a life of pleasure,
  'Tis no matter how or where!
                A fig for, &c.

With the ready trick and fable,
  Round we wander all the day;
And at night, in barn or stable,
  Hug our *doxies* on the hay. sweethearts
                A fig for, &c.

Does the train-attended carriage
  Thro' the country lighter rove?
Does the sober bed of marriage
  Witness brighter scenes of love?
                A fig for, &c.

Life is all a variorum,
  We regard not how it goes;
Let them cant about decorum,
  Who have character to lose.
                A fig for, &c.

Here's to budgets, bags and wallets!
  Here's to all the wandering train,

Here's our ragged *brats* and *callets*, children trulls
One and all cry out, Amen!

Chorus.

A fig for those by law protected!
Liberty's a glorious feast!
Courts for cowards were erected,
Churches built to please the priest.

[That this extraordinary work of minstrel-art was composed before the close of 1785, is evident from John Richmond's account of it furnished to Robert Chambers. One night after a meeting held at John Dow's, the poet, in the company of James Smith and Richmond, ventured into a very noisy assemblage of vagrants, who were making merry in a "hedge alehouse," kept by a Mrs. Gibson, known by the sobriquet of "Poosie" or "Poosie Nancy." After witnessing a little of the rough jollity there, the three young men left; and in the course of a few days, Burns recited a part of the poem to Richmond, who reported that, to the best of his recollection, it contained songs by a *Sweep* and by a *Sailor*, which do not appear in the finished cantata. About Martinmas, 1785, Richmond removed to Edinburgh, taking with him a portion of the cantata, which the poet had presented to him,—namely, that part which we have marked off with brackets.

The "Jolly Beggars" was first published in Stewart and Meikle's Tracts, 1799, without the portion which had thus been given to Richmond. It was republished by Thomas Stewart, of Glasgow, in 1801, and again in 1802, embracing the *recitativo* and song of "Merry Andrew," which had in the meantime been supplied by Richmond. The manuscript thus completed was published in fac-simile by Lumsden, of Glasgow, in 1823, with consent of Stewart, who was then the owner of it. The preface to that facsimile contains the following statement: "The manuscript was given by the poet himself to Mr. David Woodburn, at that time factor to Mr. M'Adam, of Craigengillan, and by Mr. Woodburn to Mr. Robert M'Limont, merchant in Glasgow, from whom it passed into the possession of Mr. Smith, of Greenock, who gave it to the present possessor."

The original MS. is now (1876) the property of Mr. Gilbert Burns, of Knockmaroon Lodge, County Dublin, nephew of the poet, who purchased it (along with some other manuscripts) for fifty guineas. On the fly-leaf of the bound volume is a memorandum by a daughter of Mr. Stewart, residing in the Azores, stating that her father's uncle, Mr. Richmond, the poet's early friend, gave Mr. Stewart the MS. On another leaf is written—"This manuscript

belongs to David Crichton, junior, Pictou, Nova Scotia, North America. Purchased at Terceiva, one of the Azores, or Western Islands, 13th January, 1845."

From the foregoing account, it would appear that, while Woodburn, in 1786, obtained possession of the main poem, a small portion of it, which is really inferior in quality to the rest, seems to have been purposely omitted by the author, when he stitched up the manuscript and handed it to Woodburn. That rejected part had been given to Richmond, who, in 1801, presented it to his nephew, Mr. Stewart, to complete the cantata which that gentleman had obtained from Mr. Smith, of Greenock. (Naturally, in Mr. Stewart's family, there would be more talk of the present made to him by his uncle than of that by Mr. Smith, and Mr. Stewart's daughter might easily have believed the whole MS. came from her grand-uncle.—J. H.) That this is the correct way of reconciling any apparent discrepancies in stating the pedigree of this unique manuscript, is manifest on examining the original: the long dismembered portion is written on one sheet, in a larger character, in a different tint of ink, and apparently on a different quality of paper.

It is a remarkable fact that Cromek (who, in 1810, published a copy of the Jolly Beggars from the original MS., lent by Mr. Stewart for the purpose), having heard from Mr. Richmond that a Sailor had originally formed one of the persons in the poet's drama, actually took upon him to introduce a Sailor, at that part of the last *recitativo* but one, where the Fiddler relieves the Bard of one of his Deborahs, thus,—

> "But hurchin Cupid shot a shaft,
> That play'd a dame a shavie;
> A Sailor raked her fore and aft," &c.

Cromek used other liberties with the text which we need not further refer to; but the public is now put in possession of the whole history of this wonderful poem.]

SONG—FOR A' THAT.

(Johnson's Museum, 1790.)

Tho' women's minds, like winter winds,
May shift, and turn, an' a' that,
The noblest breast adores them *maist*— most
A consequence I draw that.

Chor.—For a' that an' a' that,
And twice as *meikle's* a' that; much
The bonie lass that I *loe* best love
She'll be my *ain* for a' that. own

Great love I bear to a' the fair,
Their humble slave, an' a' that;
But lordly will, I hold it still
A mortal sin to *thraw* that. thwart
For a' that, &c.

But there is ane *aboon* the *lave*, above rest
Has wit, and sense, an' a' that;
A bonie lass, I like her best,
And wha a crime dare *ca'* that? call
For a' that, &c.

In rapture sweet this hour we meet,
Wi' mutual love an' a' that,
But for how lang the *flie may stang*, fancy may last
Let inclination law that.
For a' that, &c.

Their tricks an' craft *hae* put me daft, have
They've *taen me in* an' a' that; deceived me
But clear your decks, and—here's 'The sex!'
I like the *jads* for a' that. hussies
For a' that, &c.

[This composition is an altered version of the Bard's first song in the "Jolly Beggars." The first and third stanzas here given are wanting in the other version, and the two opening stanzas of the song in the Jolly Beggars are here omitted. Verse third of the text first appeared in Pickering's ed., 1839. We shall next proceed to give what seems to have been the poet's first intention as a song for the "sturdy caird" in the same cantata, and withdrawn in favor of that already given.]

SONG—KISSIN MY KATIE.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1790.)

Tune—"The bob o' Dumblane."

O MERRY *hae* I been teethin a *heckle*, have / flax-dressers' comb
An' merry hae I been shapin a spoon;
O merry hae I been *cloutin* a kettle, mending
An' kissin my Katie when a' was done.*
O *a' the lang day* I *ca'* at my hammer, all day long drive
An' a' the lang day I whistle and sing;
O a' the lang night I *cuddle* my *kimmer*, fondle girl
An' a' the lang night as happy's a king.

Bitter in *dool* I *lickit* my *winnins* grief eat fruit of / earnings
O' marrying Bess, to gie her a slave: †
Blest be the hour she *cool'd* in her *linnens*, grew cold / shroud
And *blythe* be the bird that sings on her grave! merry
Come to my arms, my Katie, my Katie;
O come to my arms and kiss me again!
Drucken or sober, here's to thee Katie: drunk
An' blest be the day I did it again.

[The operations described in the first stanza are all those of the tinker. It is supposed that this song was intended to be made use of in the "Jolly Beggars," and was afterwards thrown aside for the more suitable one put into the caird's lips—"My bonie lass, I work in brass."]

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* We have here a terse vidimus of the different occupations of a travelling caird. He replaces teeth in a flax- dresser's comb; he makes spoons from rams' and cows' horns; he tinkers dilapidated kettles and other metal vessels; and in the evening gives himself up to sensual pleasure.—J. H.

† In bitter sorrow I expiated my folly in marrying Bess, and thus becoming her slave.—J. H.

THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT.

INSCRIBED TO R. AIKEN, ESQ.

[KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.]

"Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
The short and simple annals of the poor."

GRAY.

MY lov'd my honor'd, much respected friend!
No mercenary bard his homage pays;
With honest pride, I scorn each selfish end,
My dearest meed, a friend's esteem and praise:
To you I sing, in simple Scottish lays,
The lowly train in life's sequester'd scene;
The native feelings strong, the guileless ways;
What Aiken in a cottage would have been;
Ah! tho' his worth unknown, far happier there I ween!

November chill blaws loud wi' angry *sugh;* sighing sound
The short'ning winter-day is near a close;
The miry beasts retreating frae the *pleugh;* plough
The black'ning trains o' *craws* to their repose: crows
The toil-worn Cotter *frae* his labor goes,— from
This night his weekly *moil* is at an end, drudgery
Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his hoes,
Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend,
And weary, o'er the moor, his course does hameward bend.

At length his lonely cot appears in view,
Beneath the shelter of an aged tree:
Th' expectant *wee-things*, *toddlin*, *stacher* through children tottering / stagger
To meet their 'dad,' wi' *flichterin'* noise and glee. fluttering

His wee bit *ingle*, *blinkin bonilie*, fire glancing cheerfully
His clean hearth-stane, his thrifty wifie's smile,
The lisping infant, prattling on his knee,
Does a' his weary *kiaugh* and care[1] beguile, carking anxiety
And makes him quite forget his labor and his toil.

Belyve, the elder bairns come drapping in, by and by
At service out, amang the farmers *roun;* around
Some *ca'* the pleugh, some herd, some *tentie* rin drive attentively
A *cannie* errand to a neibor town: easy
Their eldest hope, their *Jenny*, woman-grown, Janet
In youthfu' bloom—love sparkling in her *e'e* eye
Comes hame; perhaps, to shew a *braw* new fine gown,
Or deposite her *sair*-won *penny-fee*, hard wages
To help her parents dear, if they in hardship be.

With joy unfeign'd, brothers and sisters meet,
And each for other's welfare kindly *spiers:* enquires
The social hours, swift-winged, unnotic'd fleet;
Each tells the *uncos* that he sees or hears. strange things
The parents, partial, eye their hopeful years;
Anticipation forward points the view;
The mother, wi' her needle and her *sheers*, scissors
Gars auld *claes* look *amaist* as weel's the makes clothes almost new;
The father mixes a' wi' admonition due.

Their master's and their mistress's command,
The *younkers* a' are warned to obey; youngsters
And mind their labors wi' an *eydent* hand, diligent
And ne'er, tho' out o' sight, to *jauk* or play; loaf
"And O! be sure to fear the Lord alway,
And mind your duty, duly, morn and night;
Lest in temptation's path ye *gang* astray, go
Implore His counsel and assisting might:
They never sought in vain that sought the Lord aright."

But hark ! a rap comes gently to the door ;
  Jenny, wha *kens* the meaning *o'* the same, knows of
Tells how a neibor lad came o'er the moor,
  To do some errands, and convoy her hame.
  The wily mother sees the conscious flame
Sparkle in Jenny's *e'e*, and flush her cheek ; eye
  With heart-struck anxious care, enquires his name,
While Jenny *hafflins* is afraid to speak ; half
  Weel-pleas'd the mother hears, it's nae wild,
    worthless rake.

Wi' kindly welcome, Jenny brings him *ben*,* in
  A strappin' youth, he takes the mother's eye ;
Blythe Jenny sees the visit's no *ill ta'en* ; glad taken amiss
  The father *cracks* of horses, *pleughs*, and chats ploughs
    kye. cows
  The youngster's artless heart o'erflows wi' joy,
But *blate* an' *laithfu'*, scarce can weel behave ; bashful timid
  The mother, wi' a woman's wiles, can spy
What makes the youth sae bashfu' and sae grave ;
Weel-pleas'd to think her *bairn's* respected like child
    the lave. others of her sex

O happy love ! where love like this is found :
  O heart-felt raptures ! bliss beyond compare !
I've pacèd much this weary, mortal round,
  And sage experience bids me this declare,—
  "If Heaven a draught of heavenly pleasure spare—
One cordial in this melancholy vale,
  'Tis when a youthful, loving, modest pair
In other's arms, breathe out the tender tale,
Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the evening
    gale.†"

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* See p. 47.

† "If anything on earth deserves the name of rapture or transport, it is the feeling of green eighteen in the company of the mistress of his heart, when she repays him with an equal return of affection."—*Common-place Book*, April, 1783.

Is there, in human form, that bears a heart,
  A wretch! a villain! lost to love and truth!
That can, with studied, sly, ensnaring art,
  Betray sweet Jenny's unsuspecting youth?
  Curse on his perjur'd arts! dissembling, smooth!
Are honor, virtue, conscience, all exil'd?
  Is there no pity, no relenting ruth,
Points to the parents fondling o'er their child?
Then paints the ruin'd maid, and their distraction wild?

But now the supper crowns their simple board,
  The *halesome parritch*, chief of Scotia's food; — wholesome oatmeal porridge
The sowpe* their only *hawkie* does afford, — cow
  That, *'yont* the *hallan* snugly chows her *cood:* — beyond partition cud
  The dame brings forth, in complimental mood,
To grace the lad, her *weel-hain'd kebbuck fell;* — carefully saved, pungent cheese
  And aft he's prest, and aft he *ca's* it guid: — calls
The frugal wifie, garrulous, will tell
How 'twas a towmond auld, sin' lint was i' the bell.†

The cheerfu' supper done, *wi'* serious face, — with
  They, round the *ingle*, form a circle wide; — fireside
The sire turns o'er with patriarchal grace,
  The big *ha'-bible*,‡ *ance* his father's pride: — hall-bible once
  His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,
His *lyart haffets* wearin thin and bare; — gray temples
  Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
He *wales* a portion with judicious care; — selects
And "Let us worship God!" he says with solemn air.

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* Any liquid supped with a spoon; here it means milk. The Scotch phrase, "Bite and Sowpe" is equivalent to the English "Bit and Sup."—J. H.

† How it was a twelvemonth old since flax was in bloom.—J. H.

‡ In every Scotch family there is a large quarto or folio Bible, which comes down as a family-loom from sire to son, and is used besides as a register of births and deaths. The first purchase a young couple makes (if they have not inherited one) is a family Bible.—J. H.

They chant their artless notes in simple guise,
  They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim;
Perhaps 'Dundee's' * wild-warbling measures rise,
  Or plaintive 'Martyrs,' * worthy of the name;
  Or noble 'Elgin' * *beets* the heaven-ward flame, fans
The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays:
  Compar'd with these, Italian trills are tame;
The tickl'd ears no heartfelt raptures raise;
Nae unison *hae* they, with our Creator's praise. no have

The priest-like father reads the sacred page,
  How Abram was the friend of God on high;
Or Moses bade eternal warfare wage
  With Amalek's ungracious progeny;
  Or, how the royal bard did groaning lie
Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging ire;
  Or Job's pathetic plaint, and wailing cry;
Or rapt Isaiah's wild, seraphic fire;
Or other holy seers that tune the sacred lyre.

Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme,
  How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed;
How He, who bore in Heaven the second name,
  Had not on earth whereon to lay his head:
  How His first followers and servants sped;
The precepts sage they wrote to many a land:
  How he, who lone in Patmos banishèd,
Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand,
And heard great Bab'lon's doom pronounc'd by
    Heaven's command.

Then kneeling down to Heaven's Eternal King,
  The saint, the father, and the husband prays:
Hope "springs exulting on triumphant wing,"†

* Names of favorite Scottish psalm tunes.—J. H.
† Pope's "Windsor Forest."—*R. B.*

THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT—"And 'Let us worship God!' he says with solemn air."

That thus they all shall meet in future days,
There, ever bask in uncreated rays,
No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear,
Together hymning their Creator's praise,
In such society, yet still more dear;
While circling Time moves round in an eternal sphere.

Compar'd with this, how poor Religion's pride,
In all the pomp of method, and of art;
When men display to congregations wide
Devotion's every grace, except the heart!
The Power, incens'd, the pageant will desert,
The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole;
But haply, in some cottage far apart,
May hear, well-pleas'd, the language of the soul;
And in His Book of Life the inmates poor enroll.

Then homeward all take off their sev'ral way;
The youngling cottagers retire to rest:
The parent-pair their secret homage pay,
And proffer up to Heaven the warm request,
That He who stills the raven's clam'rous nest,
And decks the lily fair in flow'ry pride,
Would, in the way His wisdom sees the best,
For them and for their little ones provide;
But chiefly in their hearts with grace divine preside.

From scenes like these, old Scotia's grandeur springs,
That makes her lov'd at home, rever'd abroad:
Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,*
"An honest man's the noblest work of God;"†
And certes, in fair virtue's heavenly road,

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* "Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade;
A breath can make them, as a breath has made."
GOLDSMITH'S *Deserted Village.*

† Pope. Essay on Man.

The cottage leaves the palace far behind;
  What is a lordling's pomp? a cumbrous load,
Disguising oft the wretch of human kind,
Studied in arts of hell, in wickedness refined!

O Scotia! my dear, my native soil!
  For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is sent,
Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil
  Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet content!
  And O! may Heaven their simple lives prevent
From luxury's contagion, weak and vile!
  Then, howe'er crowns and coronets be rent,
A virtuous populace may rise the while,
And stand a wall of fire around their much-lov'd isle.

O Thou! who pour'd the patriotic tide,
  That stream'd thro' Wallace's undaunted heart,[2]
Who dar'd to, nobly, stem tyrannic pride,
  Or nobly die, the second glorious part:
  (The patriot's God, peculiarly thou art,
His friend, inspirer, guardian, and reward!)
  O never, never Scotia's realm desert;
But still the patriot, and the patriot-bard
In bright succession raise, her ornament and guard!

[That this poem was composed near the close of 1785, is proved by the author's words in his letter to John Richmond, 17th February, 1786. In that letter, the titles are given of five very important poems, including "The Cotter's Saturday Night," which, "among several others," he had composed since Richmond left Mauchline. Lockhart has well said—"'The Cotter's Saturday Night' is perhaps, of all Burns' pieces, the one whose exclusion from the collection, were such things possible now-a-days, would be most injurious, if not to the genius, at least to the character of the man."

The MS. copy of this poem, used by the printer of the Kilmarnock edition of his poems, is now at Irvine, carefully preserved by the Burns Club there, along with several other manuscripts. A fac-simile of it was published by Mr. Maxwell Dick, of tha town, in 1840. An earlier copy is that which was presented to

Allan Cunningham in 1834 by his publisher, Mr. James Cochrane, and is now in the British Museum, London.

The variations marked (1) and (2) were made by the author for his edition of 1793: the latter originally read "great, unhappy Wallace' heart," the change having been adopted to please Mrs. Dunlop. The expression "kiaugh and care" (1) was at the same time changed to "carking cares," to suit those who objected to the word "kiaugh" as being too antiquated. In our text, we adhere to the original words.]

The following is condensed from Allan Cunningham's very interesting note on this poem:—

When Burns was first invited to dine at Dunlop-house, a westlan dame, who acted as housekeeper, appeared to doubt the propriety of her mistress entertaining a mere ploughman who made rhymes, as if he were a gentleman of old descent. By way of convincing Mrs. M'Guistan, for that was her name, of the bard's right to such distinction, Mrs. Dunlop gave her "The Cotter's Saturday Night" to read. This was soon done: she returned the volume with a strong shaking of the head, saying, "Nae doubt gentlemen and ladies think mickle o' this, but for me it's naething but what I saw i' my father's house every day, and I dinna see how he could hae tauld it ony other way."

Of the origin of this poem, Gilbert Burns gives a clear account: —"Robert had frequently remarked to me that he thought there was something peculiarly venerable in the phrase, 'Let us worship God!' used by a decent, sober head of a family, introducing family worship. To this sentiment of the Author the world is indebted for 'The Cotter's Saturday Night.' Robert and I used frequently to walk together, when the weather was favorable, on the Sunday afternoons, and enjoyed such Sundays as would make one regret to see their number abridged. It was in one of these walks that I first heard him repeat 'The Cotter's Saturday Night.' I do not recollect to have read or heard anything by which I was more highly electrified. The fifth and sixth stanzas, and the eighteenth, thrilled with peculiar ecstasy through my soul." The household of the virtuous William Burness was the scene of the poem, and William himself was the saint, and father, and husband of this truly sacred drama.—J. H.

ADDRESS TO THE DEIL.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

"O Prince! O chief of many thronèd pow'rs!
That led th' embattl'd seraphim to war—"
MILTON.

O THOU! whatever title suit thee—
Auld "Hornie," "Satan," "Nick," or "Clootie,"*
Wha in *yon* cavern grim an' sootie, who yonder
Clos'd under hatches,
Spairges about the brunstane cootie,† scatters
To *scaud* poor wretches! scald

Hear me, auld "*Hangie*," for a wee, hangman
An' let poor damnèd bodies be;
I'm sure *sma'* pleasure it can *gie*, small give
Ev'n to a deil,
To *skelp* an' scaud poor dogs like me, spank
An' hear us squeel!

Great is thy pow'r an' great thy fame;
Far *kenn'd* an' noted is thy name; known
An' tho' yon *lowin heugh's* thy hame, blazing pit's
Thou travels far;
An' faith! thou's neither *lag* nor lame, laggard
Nor *blate* nor *scaur*. bashful / apt to be scared

Whyles, raging like a roaring lion, at times
For prey, *a'* holes an' corners tryin; all
Whyles, on the strong-wing'd tempest flyin,
Tirlin the kirks; unroofing
Whyles, in the human bosom pryin,
Unseen thou lurks.

---

* Some of the names given to the D—l in Scotland—*Hornie* from his horns; *clootie* from his cloven feet or cloots.—J. H.

† The poet imagines a foot-pail, called in Scotland a *cootie*, filled with liquid brimstone, which Satan distributes over his victims.—J. H.

I've heard my rev'rend grannie say,
In *lanely* glens ye like to stray; lonely
Or where auld ruin'd castles grey
Nod to the moon,
Ye fright the nightly wand'rer's way,
Wi' eldritch croon.*

When twilight did my *grannie* summon, grand-dame
To say her pray'rs *douce*, honest woman! decent
Aft *'yont* the *dyke* she's heard you *bummin*, beyond fence / buzzing
Wi' *eerie* drone; awe-producing
Or, rustlin, thro' the *boortrees* comin, elder-trees
Wi' heavy groan.

Ae dreary, windy, winter night,
The stars shot down wi' *sklentin* light, slanting
Wi' you mysel, I gat a fright,
Ayont the loch; beyond
Ye, like a *rash-buss*, stood in sight, rush-bush
Wi' wavin *sough* dreary sighing sound

The cudgel in my *nieve* did shake, fist
Each bristl'd hair stood like a stake,
When wi' an eldritch,† *stoor* "quaick, quaick," bass
Amang the springs,
Awa ye *squatter'd* like a drake, spluttered
On whistlin wings.

Let *warlocks* grim, an' wither'd hags, male witches
Tell how wi' you, on ragweed nags,
They skim the *muirs* an' dizzy crags, moors
Wi' wicked speed;
And in kirk-yards renew their leagues,
Owre howket dead. over resurrected

---

* With mysteriously aweful hum. The word *eldritch* implies something supernatural and frightful.—J. H

† See note on Stanza 5.

Thence, countra wives, wi' toil an' pain,
May plunge an' plunge the *kirn* in vain; churn
For oh! the yellow treasures *taen* taken away
By witchin skill;
An' *dawtet*, twal-pint *Hawkie's gane* petted cow gone
As *yell's* the *bill.** dry bull

Thence, mystic knots mak great abuse
On young *guidmen*, fond, keen an' *croose*; husbands, self-confident
When the best wark-lume i' the house,
By *cantraip wit*, magic slight
Is instant made *no* worth a louse, not
Just at the bit.

When *thowes* dissolve the snawy *hoord*, thaws wreaths
An' float the jinglin icy boord, †
Then, *water-kelpies* haunt the *foord*, water-spirits ford
By your direction,
And 'nighted trav'llers are allur'd
To their destruction.

And *aft* your moss-traversin "*Spunkies*" oft, will o' the wisps
Decoy the wight that late an' drunk is:
The *bleezin*, curst, mischievous monkies blazing
Delude his eyes,
Till in some miry slough he sunk is,
Ne'er mair to rise. never more

When mason's mystic word an' grip
In storms an' tempests raise you up,

---

*She gave twelve Scotch pints or twenty-four English quarts a day. The cow is the most esteemed possession of the thrifty, well-doing Scotch peasant. It supplies the "sowpe of kitchen" for his and his family's porridge, and keeps them in butter and cheese. It and its products are therefore the favorite objects of attack by malicious witches, and the good wife is always on the watch against such.—J. H.

† The icy board is called jingling in allusion to the sound it gives out when curling-stones pass over it.—J. H.

Some cock or cat your rage *maun* stop, must
Or, strange to tell!
The youngest "brither" ye wad *whip* pick up and carry
Aff *straught* to hell. straight

Lang syne in Eden's bonie yard, long ago
When youthfu' lovers first were pair'd,
An' all the soul of love they shar'd,
The raptur'd hour,
Sweet on the fragrant flow'ry *swaird*, sward
In shady bow'r;

Then you, ye auld, *sneck-drawin** dog!
Ye cam to Paradise incog,
An' play'd on man a cursed *brogue*, trick
(Black be your *fa'!*) doom
An' *gied* the infant warld a *shog*, gave shock
'*Maist* ruin'd a.' almost

D'ye mind that day when in a *bizz* bustle
Wi' reeket duds, an' reestet gizz,†
Ye did present your *smootie* phiz sooty
'*Mang* better folk, among
An' *sklented* on the man of Uzz squinted
Your spitefu' joke?‡

An' how he gat him *i'* your thrall, in
An' *brak* him out o' house an' *hal'*, broke hold
While scabs an' *botches* did him gall, blotches
Wi' bitter *claw;* scratching
An' *lows'd* his ill-tongu'd wicked *scaul*— loosed } scolding wife }
Was warst *ava?* of all

---

*Sneck-drawin': drawing the sneck or latch stealthily and with thievish purpose; hence, insidious deceitful, treacherous. See note on "Nick-scraping," p 285.—J. H.

† With smoke stained rags and fire-shrivelled (literally roasted) face.—J. H.

‡ Job 1: 6–12.

But a' your doings to rehearse,
Your wily snares an' *fechtin* fierce, fighting
Sin' that day Michael * did you pierce, since
Down to this time,
Wad *ding* a *Lallan* tongue, or *Erse*, surpass lowland gaelic
In prose or rhyme.

An' now, auld "Cloots," I *ken* ye're thinkin, know
A certain bardie's *rantin*, drinkin, frolicking
Some luckless hour will send him *linkin*, in a hurry
To your black pit;
But, faith! he'll turn a corner *jinkin*. dodging
An' cheat you yet.

But fare-you-weel, auld "Nickie-ben!"
O wad ye tak a thought and mend!
Ye *aiblins* might—I *dinna ken*— perhaps don't know
Still *hae* a stake have
I'm wae to think upo' yon den, I am sorry
Ev'n for your sake!

[The only variation we have to record in connection with this poem is in the seventh verse from the close, and it is a very significant one. In the letter to John Richmond, of 17th February, 1786, already alluded to in the note to "The Cotter's Saturday Night," the poet hints at something disagreeable having happened with respect to himself. The reference there was to an occurrence which, shortly afterwards, led to a rupture between Jean Armour and him. As the present poem then stood, the verse indicated read as follows:—

"*Lang syne*, in Eden's happy scene long ago
When strappin Adam's days were green,
And Eve was like my bonie Jean—
My dearest part,
A dancin, sweet, young, handsome *quean*, girl
O guileless heart."

For that stanza, the one in the text was substituted when he came to prepare the poem for the press. A similar obliteration

Vide Milton, Book vi.—*R. B.*

of the name of Jean was made in the poem entitled "The Vision." He would have deleted "the adored name" from the "Epistle to Davie" also, we may be very certain, had it been possible to do so without seriously injuring it.

This "Address to the Deil" is one of the author's most popular pieces, and has been the theme of unmingled praise by critics. The poet's relenting tenderness, even towards the author and perpetual embodiment of evil, is a fine stroke at the close. "Humor and tenderness," says Dr. Currie, "are here so happily intermixed, that it is impossible to say which predominates."]

SCOTCH DRINK.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

Gie him strong drink until he wink, give
That's sinking in despair;
An' liquor *guid* to fire his *bluid*, good blood
That's prest wi' grief an' care:
There let him *bowse*, an' deep carouse, drink freely
Wi' bumpers flowing o'er,
Till he forgets his loves or debts,
An' minds his griefs no more.

SOLOMON'S PROVERBS, xxxi. 6, 7.

LET other poets raise a frácas
'Bout vines, an' wines, an' *drucken* Bacchus, drunken
An' crabbet names an' stories rack us,
An' grate our *lug*: ear
I sing the juice Scotch *bere* can mak us, barley
In glass or jug.*

O thou, my muse! guid auld Scotch drink!
Whether thro' *wimplin* worms thou *jink*, winding steal
Or, richly brown, *ream owre* the brink, cream over
In glorious *faem*, foam
Inspire me, till I lisp an' wink,
To sing thy name!

* In the form of whisky or beer.

Let husky wheat the *haughs* adorn, holmes
An' *aits* set up their *awnie* horn, oats bearded
An' pease an' beans, at e'en or morn,
Perfume the plain:
Leeze me on thee, John Barleycorn, commend me to
Thou king o' grain!

On thee aft Scotland *chows her cood*, chews her cud
In *souple* scones,* the *wale* o' food! supple choice
Or tumblin in the boiling flood!
Wi' kail an' beef;†
But when thou pours thy strong heart's blood,
There thou shines chief.

Food fills the *wame*, an' keeps us *leevin;* belly living
Tho' life's a gift no worth receivin,
When heavy-dragg'd wi' *pine* an' grievin; pain
But oil'd by thee,
The wheels o' life *gae* down-hill, *scrievin*, go gliding swiftly
Wi' rattlin glee

Thou clears the head o' *doited Lear;* dazed learning
Thou cheers the heart o' drooping Care;
Thou strings the nerves o' Labor *sair*, sore
At's weary toil;
Thou ev'n brightens dark Despair
Wi' gloomy smile.

Aft, clad in massy siller weed,‡
Wi' *gentles* thou erects thy head; people of condition
Yet, humbly kind in time o' need,
The poor man's wine;

---

* Scones are soft cakes of barley-meal, or wheat flour, or oat-meal mixed with potatoes, baked on the griddle.—J. H.

† Broth made from barley boiled with kale and beef, is the national soup of Scotland.—J. H.

‡ Often, in the form of ale, appearing in silver mugs.—J. H.

His wee drap *parritch*, or his bread, oat meal porridge
Thou *kitchens* fine.* relish

Thou art the life o' public haunts;
But thee, what were our fairs and *rants?* without frolics
Ev'n godly meetings o' the *saunts*, saints
By thee inspir'd,
When, gaping, they besiege the tents,
Are doubly fir'd.†

That merry night we get the corn in,‡
O sweetly, then, thou *reams* the *horn* in! froth / horn cup
Or *reekin* on a New-year mornin smoking
In *cog* or *bicker*, wooden mug / bowl
An' just a *wee drap sp'ritual burn* in, little drop whisky
An' *gusty sucker!*§ toothful sugar

When Vulcan gies his bellows breath
An' ploughman gather wi' their *graith*, implements
O rare! to see thee fizz an' *freath* froth
I' th' *lugget caup!* eared cup
Then *Burnewin* comes on like death blacksmith
At ev'ry *chaup*. stroke

Nae mercy, then, for *airn* or steel; iron
The brawnie, *bainie*, ploughman *chiel*, large-boned lad
Brings hard owrehip, wi' sturdy wheel,
The strong forehammer,
Till block an' *studdie* ring an' reel, anvil
Wi' *dinsome* clamor. noisy

When *skirlin weanies* see the light, squalling infants
Thou maks the gossips clatter bright,

---

* Brisk small ale or beer is used in Scotland with porridge as well as with bread, in place of milk, when the cow is "yell."—J. H.

† See "The Holy Fair."

‡ The Kirn or Harvest-Home.—J. H.

§ Ale-posset with whisky added and sweetened with sugar.—J. H.

How *fumblin cuifs* their dearies slight; imbecile dolts
Wae worth the name! woe be to
Nae *howdie* gets a social night, midwife
Or *plack frae* them. penny from

When neibors anger at a *plea*, suit
An' just as *wud* as *wud* can be, mad
How easy can the *barley-brie* barley-juice (*whisky*)
Cement the quarrel!
It's aye the cheapest lawyer's fee,
To taste the barrel.

Alake! that e'er my muse has reason, alas!
To *wyte* her countrymen wi' treason! blame
But mony daily *weet* their *weason* wet throat
Wi' liquors nice,
An' hardly, in a winter season,
E'er spier her price. ever ask

Wae worth that brandy, burning trash
Fell source o' mony a pain and *brash!* sudden attack
Twins mony a poor, doylt, drucken hash,*
O' half his days;
An' sends, beside, auld Scotland's cash
To her *warst faes.* worst foes

Ye Scots, *wha* wish *auld* Scotland well! who old
Ye chief, to you my tale I tell,
Poor, *plackless* devils like mysel! penniless
It *sets you ill*, ill becomes you
Wi' bitter, *dearthfu'* wines to *mell*, expensive meddle
Or foreign gill.

May gravels round his *blather* wrench, bladder
An' gouts torment him inch by inch,

* Robs many a poor dazed, drunken fool.

Wha twists his *gruntle* wi' a *glunch* — mouth — frown
O' sour disdain,
Out owre a glass o' whisky-punch — over
Wi' honest men! — with

O whisky! soul o' plays and pranks!
Accept a *bardie's* gratefu' thanks! — poet's
When wanting thee, what tuneless *cranks* — grating sounds
Are my poor verses!
Thou comes—they rattle i' their ranks
At *ither's* a—s! — other's

Thee, Ferintosh!* O sadly lost!
Scotland lament *frae* coast to coast! — from
Now colic grips, an' barkin *hoast* — cough
May kill us a';
For loyal Forbes' charter'd boast
Is *ta'en awa!* — taken away

Thae curst horse-leeches o' th' Excise, — these
Wha mak the whisky *stells* their prize! — stills
Haud up thy han'. Deil!† ance, twice, thrice!
There, seize the *blinkers!* — worthless lot
An' bake them up in *brunstane* pies — brimstone
For poor d—n'd drinkers.

Fortune! if thou'll but gie me still
Hale breeks, a *scone*,‡ an' whisky gill, — whole breeches bannock

---

* Whisky from a privileged distillery in the barony of Ferintosh, in Cromartyshire, belonging to Forbes of Culloden. The privilege was granted by an act of the Scottish Parliament (1690), for services rendered by Forbes, and expenses incurred, at the Revolution (1688), and was abolished by Parliament in 1785.—J. H.

† Hold up your hand, as if offering a bid for them and wanting them —J. H.

‡ See stanza fourth.

An' *rowth* o' rhyme to rave at will, abundance
Tak a' the rest, take all
An' deal't about as thy blind skill
Directs thee best.

[Gilbert Burns, in his narrative of his brother's early life, thus remarks on the subject of this poem:—"Notwithstanding the praise he has bestowed on 'Scotch Drink'—which seems to have misled his historians—I do not recollect, during these seven years [the Tarbolton period], nor till towards the end of his commencing author—when his growing celebrity occasioned his being often in company—to have ever seen him intoxicated, nor was he at all given to drinking."—*Currie's Ed.*, 1801, vol. i., p. 73.

Robert Fergusson had composed verses, in the same measure, on the subject of "Caller Water," and Burns, in search of a theme to aid in filling his contemplated volume, took up "Scotch Drink." He has not treated the topic as a temperance lecturer might have done; but the generous reader will be apt to say with Chambers that "the humane passage in verse seventh redeems much that may otherwise be objectionable in the poem."

The following variation occurs in verse twelve, in the first edition:—

Wae worth them for't!
While healths gae round to him wha, *tight*, "fit"
Gies famous sport.]

(Mr. Waddell institutes a comparison between this poem of Burns and Horace's odd *Ad Amphoram*, and indicates that the superiority in humor and genial humanity lies with the Scottish bard. There is, he says, "an admixture on Burns' side of deep and gentle charity, that makes his humor like a pungent balm to the consciences of mankind."—J. H.)

THE AULD FARMER'S NEW-YEAR MORNING SALUTATION TO HIS AULD MARE, MAGGIE,

On giving her the accustomed ripp of corn to hansel in the New Year.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

A GUID New-year I wish thee Maggie!
Hae, there's a *ripp* to thy auld *baggie:* handful stomach
Tho' thou's *howe-backit* now, an' *knaggie* hollow-backed / bony
I've seen the day
Thou could hae gaen like ony *staggie,* small stag
Out-owre the *lay.* over lea

Tho, now thou's *dowie,* stiff an' *crazy,* spiritless worn out
An' thy auld hide as white's a daisie,
I've seen thee *dappl't,* sleek an' *glaizie,* dappled glossy
A bonie gray:
He should been *ticht* that *daur't* to *raize* thee, fit / dared / rouse
Ance in a day. once on a time

Thou ance was *i'* the foremost rank, in
A filly *buirdly, steeve* an' *swank;* stately firm agile
An' set weel down a shapely shank,
As e'er tread *yird;* earth
An' could hae flown out-owre a *stank,* ditch or pool
Like *ony* bird. any

It's now some nine-an'-twenty year,
Sin' thou was my *guid-father's meere;* father-in-law's / mare
He *gied* me thee, *o'* *tocher* clear, gave of dowry
An' fifty mark;*
Tho' it was sma', 'twas weel-won *gear,* money
An' thou was *stark.* strong

* A Scotch coin worth 13*s.* 4*d.* Scotch, or 1*s.* 1⅓*d.* English or 26⅔ cents.—J. H.

When first I *gaed* to woo my *Jenny*, went Janet
Ye then was trottin wi' your *minnie:* dam
Tho' ye was trickie', *slee*, an' funnie, sly
Ye ne'er was *donsie;* mischievous
But hamely, *tawie*, quiet, an' *cannie*, tractable gentle
An' *unco sonsie.* in high condition

That day, ye pranc'd wi' *muckle* pride, much
When ye *bure* hame my bonie bride:
An' sweet an' gracefu' she did ride, bore
Wi' maiden air!
Kyle-Stewart* I could bragget wide,
For *sic* a pair. such

Tho' now ye *dow* but *hoyte* and hobble can limp
An' *wintle* like a *saumont-coble*, rock salmon-boat
That day, ye was a *jinker* noble, runner
For *heels an' win'*! speed and wind
An' ran them till they a' did *wauble*, reel
Far, far behin'!

When thou an' I were young an' *skiegh*, high-mettled
An' *stable-meals*† at fairs were *driegh*, carousals long-continued
How thou wad prance, an' snore, an' *skriegh*, neigh shrilly
An' tak the road!
Town's-bodies ran, an' stood *abiegh*, out of the way
An' *ca't* thee mad. called

When thou was corn't, an' I was mellow,‡
We took the road aye like a swallow:

---

* See note, page 203.

† The stable-meal is the "gill" drunk after ordering the horse to be brought out of the stable, and just before setting out homeward. But when one good fellow orders his "gill" or "half-mutchkin," and another his, the "meal" is apt to become "dreigh."—J. H.

‡ When you had got your starting feed of oats, and I was mellow with the "stable-meal" and its accompaniments.—J. H.

At *brooses** thou had ne'er a fellow, wedding races across country
For pith an' speed;
But ev'ry tail thou *pay't* them hollow, beat
Where'er thou *gaed.* went

The sma', droop-rumpl't, hunter cattle
Might *aiblins waur't* thee for a *brattle;* perhaps beat dash
But sax Scotch mile, thou try't their mettle,
An' *gar't* them *whaizle:* made wheeze
Nae whip nor spur, but just a *wattle* supple wand
O' *saugh* or hazle. willow

Thou was a noble 'fittie-lan',†
As e'er in *tug* or *tow* was drawn! trace rope
Aft thee an' I, in *aught* hours' *gaun,* going (*in plough*) eight
In guid March-weather,
Hae *turn'd sax rood beside our han,'* ploughed six roods
For days *thegither.* together

Thou never *braing't,* an' *fetch't,* an' plunged jibbed
flisket; fretted
But thy auld tail thou wad *hae whisket,* have whisked
An' spread *abreed* thy weel-fill'd *brisket,* abroad breast
Wi' pith an' power;
Till sprittie knowes wad rair't an' risket,
An' slypet owre.‡

When frosts lay lang an' snaws were deep,
An' threaten'd labor back to keep,
I gied thy *cog* a wee bit heap feed-dish
Aboon the *timmer:* wooden edge

---

*On bringing home a bride from where the marriage was celebrated it was customary to have a race, when he who reached the house first won the prize—a kiss of the bride.—J. H.

† The near horse of the hindmost pair in ploughing.

‡ Till knolls tough with roots would roar and crackle as they were torn up, and the clods fall smoothly over.—J. H.

I *ken'd* my Maggie wad na sleep, knew
For that, *or simmer.** before summer

In cart or car thou never *reestet;* balked
The *steyest brae* thou wad hae fac't it; steepest hill
Thou never *lap*, an' *stenned*, an' leapt strained
breastet, plunged
Then stood to blaw;
But just thy step a wee thing hastet, went
Thou *snoov't awa.* smoothly on

My "pleugh" is now thy bairn-time a',†
Four gallant brutes as e'er did draw;
Forbye *sax mae* I've *sellt awa*, six more sold off
That thou hast nurst:
They drew me *thretteen pund an' twa*, fifteen pounds
The very *warst.* worst

Mony a *sair daurg* we twa hae wrought, hard day's work
An' *wi'* the weary *warl'* fought! with world
An' mony an anxious day, I thought,
We *wad* be beat! would
Yet here to crazy age we're brought,
Wi' something yet.

An' think na', my auld trusty servan', don't think
That now perhaps *thou's* less deservin thou art
An' thy auld days may end in starvin;
For my last *fow*, bushel
A heapet *stimpart*,‡ I'll reserve ane ⅛ of a bushel
Laid by for you.

---

* She would repay his kindness by faithful work in Spring.—J. H.

† All the four horses now working in my plough are your progeny.—J. H.

‡ The old man would reserve a stimpart or good feed from his very last bushel for his faithful old horse.—J. H.

THE TWA DOGS.

We've worn to crazy years thegither;
We'll *toyte* about wi' *ane anither;* totter. one another
Wi' *tentie* care I'll *flit* thy tether watchful move
To some *hain'd rig,* reserved / ridge
Whare ye may nobly *rax your leather,* stretch your skin
Wi' sma' fatigue.

[Our poet seems to have "hansel'd" the eventful year 1786 with this poem, which is executed in his very best manner. Professor Wilson, in his famed Essay on Burns, declares that, to his knowledge, the recital of it has brought tears of pleasure to the eyes, and "humanised the heart of a Gilmerton carter."]

THE TWA DOGS:

A TALE.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

'TWAS in that place o' Scotland's Isle,
That bears the name o' auld "King Coil,"*
Upon a bonie day in June,
When *wearin thro'* the afternoon, somewhat late in
Twa dogs, that were na *thrang* at hame, busy
Forgather'd ance upon a time. encountered once
The first I'll name, they *ca'd* him "Cæsar," called
Was keepet for "his Honor's" pleasure:
His hair, his size, his mouth, his *lugs,* ears
Shew'd he was nane o' Scotland's dogs;
But *whalpet* some place far abroad, whelped
Whare sailors *gang* to fish for cod.† go

* The district of Kyle in Ayrshire, the central division of the county, and separated from Carrick on the south by the Doon, and from Cunningham on the north by the Irvine. Within this district Burns was born and lived, except the few months he was at school at Kirkoswald, until he went to reside permanently in Dumfries-shire. The reader will find a poetical outline of this region as depicted on the Muse's robe of Coila in the "Vision." Its name is traditionally said to be derived from Coilus, a pre-historic Pictish sovereign entombed, according to popular belief, near the old mansion of Coilsfield. In 1837 careful excavations discovered calcined remains buried here in earthen urns, which represented unquestionably some hero of the primitive race. Coilsfield, the Bloody Burn and the Dead Man's Holm are names still attached to the locality. For the above interesting note we are largely indebted to Waddell.—J. H.

† Newfoundland.

His lockèd, letter'd, braw brass collar
Shew'd him the gentleman an' scholar;
But though he was o' high degree,
The fient a pride, nae pride had he; deuce a particle of
But *wad hae* spent an hour caressin, would have
Ev'n wi' a tinkler-gipsey's *messan:* cur
At kirk or market, mill or *smiddie*, smithy
Nae *tawted tyke*, tho' e'er sae *duddie*, rough cur ragged
But he wad stand, as glad to see him,
An' *stroan'd* on stanes an' hillocks wi' him. urinated

The tither was a ploughman's collie—
A rhyming, ranting, roving *billie*,* fellow
Wha for his friend an' comrade had him,
And in his freaks had "Luath" *ca'd* him, named
After some dog in Highland sang,†
Was made *lang syne*—Lord knows how lang. long since

He was a *gash* an' faithfu' *tyke*, sagacious dog
As ever lap a *sheugh* or *dyke*. ditch fence
His honest, *sonsie*, *baws'nt* face happy white-striped
Ay gat him friends in *ilka* place; every
His breast was white, his *tousie* back shaggy
Weel clad wi' coat o' glossy black;
His *gawsie* tail, wi' upward curl, large handsome
Hung *owre* his *hurdies* wi' a swirl. over hips

Nae doubt but they were *fain o' ither*, fond of each other
And unco *pack an' thick* thegither; friendly and intimate
Wi' social nose *whyles snuff'd an' snowket;* sometimes smelled and poked
Whyles mice an' *moudieworts* they *howket;* moles dug up
Whyles scour'd awa' in lang excursion, sometimes
An' worry'd *ither* in diversion; each other
Till tir'd at last wi' mony a farce,
They set them down upon their arse,

---

*Burns himself.

†Cuchullin's dog in Ossian's "Fingal."—*R. B.* The reference made to the indefinite antiquity of Highland song seems to indicate Burns' acquaintance with the controversy then going on relative to the genuineness of the Poems of Ossian and his faith therein.—J. H.

An' there began a lang digression
About the "lords o' the creation."

CÆSAR.

I've aften wonder'd, honest Luath,
What sort o' life poor dogs like you have;
An' when the gentry's life I saw,
What way poor bodies liv'd *ava.* at all
Our laird gets in his rackèd rents
His coals, his kane, an' a' his stents*
He rises when he likes himsel;
His flunkies answer at the bell;
He *ca's* his coach; he ca's his horse; calls
He draws a bonie silken purse,
As lang's my tail, whare, thro' the *steeks,* stitches
The yellow *letter'd Geordie*† *keeks.* stamped guinea peeps
Frae morn to e'en it's nought but toiling,
At baking, roasting, frying, boiling;
An' tho' the gentry first are *stechin,* panting from / over-feeding
Yet ev'n the *ha' folk* fill their *pechan* servants stomach
Wi' sauce, ragouts, an' sic like *trashtrie,* trash
That's little short o' downright *wastrie.* waste
Our whipper-in, *wee, blastet wonner,* blasted little sinner
Poor, worthless elf, it eats a dinner,
Better than ony tenant-man
His Honor has in a' *the lan':* the estate
An' what poor cot-folk *pit* their *painch* in, put paunch
I own it's past my comprehension.

LUATH.

Trowth, Cæsar, *whyles,* they're *fash't* eneugh: indeed / sometimes / perplexed
A cotter *howkin* in a *sheugh,* digging ditch

---

* Stents: assessments, especially in labor or produce, imposed on tenants. Besides rent, a laird had several claims on his tenants. They had to draw his coals, supply a certain amount of produce (especially fowls) from the farm under the name of "Kane," often to assist in securing his harvest, to furnish a certain amount of turf or peats, etc.—J. H.

† See p. 68.

Wi' dirty stanes *biggin* a *dyke*, building fence
Baring a quarry, and *sic* like; uncovering such
Himsel, a wife, he thus sustains,
A *smytrie* o' wee *duddie weans*, tribe ragged children
An' nought but his *han'-daurg*, to keep hand's labor
Them right an' tight in *thack an' rape.** thatch and rope
An when they meet wi' sair disasters,
Like loss o' health or want o' masters,
Ye *maist wad* think, a wee touch langer almost would
An' they *maun* starve o' *cauld* and hunger: must cold
But how it comes, I never *kent* yet, knew
They're maistly wonderfu' contented
An' *buirdly chiels*, an' clever *hizzies*, stately fellows girls
Are bred in *sic* a way as this is. such

CÆSAR.

But then to see how ye're neglecket,
How huff'd, an' cuff'd, an' disrespecket!
L—d man, our gentry care as little
For delvers, ditchers, an' sic cattle;
They *gang* as saucy *by* poor folk, go past
As I wad by a stinking *brock*. badger
I've notic'd on our laird's *court-day*,— rent-day
An' mony a time my heart's been *wae*,— sad
Poor tenant bodies, scant o' cash,
How they *maun thole* a factor's *snash* must bear insolence
He'll stamp an' threaten, curse an' swear
He'll apprehend them, *poind* their *gear;* attach property
While they maun stan', wi' aspect humble,
An' hear it a', an' fear an' tremble!†
I see how folk live that hae riches;
But surely poor-folk *maun* be wretches! must

---

* "Tight in thack and rape" is a Scottish phrase equivalent to "in proper condition." It dates back to the days when all houses were thatched, and to be "tight in thack and rape" was the one grand desideratum.—J. H.

† Described from his father's experience in Mount Oliphant.—J. H.

LUATH.

They're no sae wretched's *ane wad* one would
think ;
Tho' constantly on *poortith's* brink, poverty's
They're sae accustom'd wi' the sight,
The view o't *gies* them little fright. gives
Then chance and fortune are sae guided,
They're ay in less or mair provided ;
An' tho' fatigu'd wi' close employment,
A blink o' rest's a sweet enjoyment.
The dearest comfort o' their lives,
Their *grushie weans* an' faithfu' wives ; thriving children
The prattling things are just their pride,
That sweetens a' their fire-side.
An' *whyles* twalpennie * worth o' *nappy* sometimes ale
Can mak the *bodies unco* happy : good folks wonderfully
They lay aside their private cares,
To mind the Kirk and State affairs ;
They'll talk o' patronage an' priests,
Wi' kindling fury i' their breasts, †
Or tell what new taxation's comin,
An' *ferlie* at the folk in Lon'on. marvel
As bleak-fac'd *Hallowmass* returns. All Saints' day (31st October)
They get the jovial, *rantin kirns*, frolicsome harvest homes
When rural life, of ev'ry station,
Unite in common recreation ; glances from the eye
Love *blinks*, Wit *slaps*, an' social Mirth hits
Forgets there's Care upo' the earth.

---

* Scotch money was worth just one-twelfth of English money of the same name. Twelvepence Scotch was, therefore, just equal to one penny sterling, or two cents.—J. H.

† This is another example of Burns' marvellous power in catching the characteristics of the Scottish peasantry and depicting these by brief happy touches. Their fondness for polemical discussion is probably the most prominent feature in their mental character. Their very interest in religion leads them to criticize their ministers freely, often severely, and to denounce what they regard as abuses in the church with bitterness. Patronage, or the right of one land-owner (called the patron) to present a minister to a charge despite the wishes of the people has always been the object of their special abhorrence, and the cause of every disruption in the church. It is now abolished.—J. H.

That merry day the year begins,
They bar the door on frosty *win's*; winds
The *nappy reeks* wi' mantling *ream*, strong ale smokes / creamy froth
An' sheds a heart-inspiring steam;
The *luntin* pipe, an' *sneeshin mill*, glowing snuff-mull
Are handed round wi' right guid will;
The *cantie* auld folks *crackin crouse*, cheery / conversing gleefully
The young anes *ranting* thro' the house— frolicking
My heart has been sae *fain* to see them, glad
That I for joy hae barket wi' them,
Still it's *owre* true that ye hae said, too
Sic game is now owre aften play'd; such
There's mony a creditable stock
O' decent, honest, *fawsont* folk, seemly
Are riven out *baith* root an' branch, both
Some rascal's pridefu' greed to quench,
Wha thinks to knit himsel the faster
In favor wi' some *gentle* master, aristocratic
Wha, *aiblins thrang* a parliamentin', perhaps busy
For Britain's guid his *saul* indentin'— soul

CÆSAR.

Haith, lad, ye little *ken* about it: faith know
For Britain's guid! guid faith! I doubt it.
Say rather, *gaun* as Premiers lead him: going
An' saying aye or no 's they bid him:
At operas an' plays parading,
Mortgaging, gambling, masquerading,
Or maybe, in a frolic *daft*, foolish
To Hague or Calais takes a waft,
To mak a tour an' tak a whirl,
To learn *bon ton*, an' see the worl'.
There, at Vienna or Versailles,
He *rives* his father's *auld* entails;* tears up old

* The law of entail was one by which the proprietor of an estate was debarred from selling it or any part of it, or even from indebting it beyond his own lifetime, so that every new heir received it unburdened and undiminished. This law, and that of primogeniture, were the means by which the great estates of

Or by Madrid he takes the route
To thrum guitars an' *fecht wi' nowt;* fight with bulls
Or down Italian vista startles,
Wh–re-hunting amang groves o' myrtles:
Then *bowses drumlie* German water, swills muddy
To mak himsel look fair an' fatter,
An' clear the consequential sorrows,
Love-gifts of Carnival signoras.
For Britain's guid! for her destruction!
Wi' dissipation, feud an' faction.

LUATH.

Hech man! dear sirs! is that the *gate* alas way
They waste sae mony a *braw* estate! fine
Are we *sae foughten* an' harass'd so toiled
For *gear* to *gang* that gate at last? money go
O would they stay aback *frae* courts, from
An' please themsels wi' countra sports,
It *wad* for ev'ry ane be better, would
The *laird*, the tenant, an' the cotter! land-owner
For *thae* frank, *rantin'*, ramblin' these frolicsome
billies, fellows
Fient haet o' them's ill-hearted fellows; not a whit of
Except for breakin o' their timmer,*
Or speakin lightly o' their *limmer*, mistress
Or shootin of a hare or moor-cock,†
The ne'er-a-bit they're ill to poor folk.
But will ye tell me, master Cæsar,
Sure great folk's life 's a life o' pleasure?
Nae *cauld* nor hunger e'er can *steer* them, cold / molest
The vera thought o't need na fear them.

Britain were kept entire. There were devices—costly and hard to carry out—by which a proprietor in desperate circumstances might in certain contingencies break the entail, but the doing so was always regarded as a proof of great extravagance—generally of dissipation—and unjust to his descendants. The law is now much modified and will probably soon be removed from the Statute Book. —J. H.

*Stealing firewood from their plantations.—J. H.

†Poaching.—J. H.

CÆSAR.

L—d, man, were ye but *whyles* whare sometimes
I am,
The *gentles*, ye wad ne'er envy * them! people of station
It's true, they need *na* starve or sweat, not
Thro' winter's *cauld*, or simmer's heat; cold
They've nae *sair-wark* to *craze* their hard work / wear out
banes,
An' fill auld-age wi' grips an' *granes:* groans
But human *bodies* are *sic* fools, creatures such
For a' their colleges an' schools,
That when nae real ills perplex them,
They mak enow themsels to vex them;
An' ay the less they *hae* to *sturt* them, have distress
In like proportion less will hurt them.
A country fellow at the pleugh,
His acre's till'd, he's right eneugh;
A country girl at her wheel,
Her *dizzen's* done,† she's *unco weel;* dozen all right
But gentlemen, an' ladies *warst*, worst
Wi' ev'n-down want o' wark are curst.
They loiter, lounging, *lank* an' lazy; listless
Tho' *deil-haet* ails them, yet uneasy: d—l a whit
Their days insipid, dull and tasteless;
Their nights unquiet, lang an' restless.
An' ev'n their sports, their balls an' races,
Their galloping through public places,
There's sic parade, sic pomp an' art,
The joy can scarcely reach the heart.
The men *cast-out* in party matches, quarrel
Then *sowther* a' in deep debauches. solder
Ae night they're mad wi' drink an' wh-ring, one
Niest day their life is past enduring. next

---

* Accent on last syllable of envy.—J. H.

† A dozen cuts of one hundred and twenty threads each was the prescribed quantity a country servant lass had to spin after accomplishing her household work.—J. H.

The ladies arm-in-arm in clusters,
As great an' gracious a' as sisters ;
But hear their absent thoughts *o' ither*, of each other
They're a' run deils* an' *jads thegither*. jades together
Whyles, owre the wee bit cup an' *platie*, sometimes / saucer
They sip the scandal-potion pretty ;
Or *lee-lang nights*, wi' crabbet *leuks* whole nights long / looks
Pore *owre* the devil's pictur'd beuks ;† over
Stake on a chance a farmer's *stackyard*, barnyard
An' cheat like ony unhang'd blackguard.
There's some exceptions, man an' woman ;
But this is gentry's life in common.

‡By this, the sun was out o' sight,
An' darker *gloaming* brought the night ; twilight
The *bum-clock* humm'd wi' lazy drone ; night-beetle
The *kye* stood *rowtin* i' the *loan* ; cows lowing lane
When up they *gat*, an' shook their *lugs*, got ears
Rejoic'd they were na men, but dogs ;
An' each took aff his several way,
Resolv'd to meet some ither day.

["The tale of 'Twa Dogs' was composed after the resolution of publishing was nearly taken. Robert had had a dog which he called 'Luath,' that was a great favorite. The dog had been killed by the wanton cruelty of some person the night before my father's death. Robert said to me that he should like to confer such immortality as he could bestow upon his old friend Luath, and that he had a great mind to introduce something into the book under the title of 'Stanzas to the memory of a quadruped friend ;' but this plan was given up for the tale as it now stands. 'Cæsar'

* D—l's or imps just escaped from their proper home.—J. H.

† Cards are called in Scotland the "Deil's picture-books."—J. H.

‡ "The greatest masters of landscape and animal painting," says Waddell, "by their combined efforts could produce no finer representation (of evening) than that which follows in the four succeeding lines. There is not, in the whole compass of Shakspeare a more perfect picture, including figure, color, action, time, and sound, with moral sense conjoined, than is here presented in some two-score words : yet the whole concluding portion of this wonderful work was dashed off most probably during an evening's walk or ride from Kilmarnock to Mossgiel, in child-like acquiescence with the suggestions of a printer, and to meet the requirements of the compositor when *his* operations began."

was merely the creature of the poet's imagination, created for the purpose of holding chat with his favorite *Luath.*"—*Letter of Gilbert Burns*, vol. iii., Appendix, Currie's Ed.

The main object of this poem, Dr. Currie has remarked, "seems to be to inculcate a lesson of contentment on the lower classes of society, by shewing that their superiors are neither much better nor happier than themselves. . . . The dogs of Burns, excepting in their talent for moralizing, are downright dogs, and not, like the horses of Swift, and 'Hind and Panther' of Dryden, men in the shape of brutes."

The first variation we have to notice is in the sixth paragraph of the poem,—some of the poet's more squeamish critics having prevailed on him to change a very simple, natural and graphic couplet to a very tame and inexpressive one. Accordingly, in the edition of 1793, instead of the lines in our text, we read as follows:—

> Until wi' daffin weary grown,
> Upon a knowe they sat them down:

and from one of his manuscripts of that period, it might be inferred that the alteration cost him some trouble, as the former line there reads thus:—

> Till tired at last, and weary grown.

Some close observer of the canine species has remarked that dogs never choose a "knowe" to sit on. The poet's picture ought not to have been meddled with.

The second variation is found in the edition of 1786, where, instead of the improved text, we read thus:—

> "An' purge the bitter ga's an' cankers,
> O' curst Venetian b—res an' ch—ncres."]

THE AUTHOR'S EARNEST CRY AND PRAYER.

TO THE SCOTCH REPRESENTATIVES IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.*

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

Dearest of distillation! last and best——
——How art thou lost!——

PARODY ON MILTON.

YE Irish lords, ye knights an' squires,
Wha represent our brughs an' shires,
An' *doucely* manage our affairs — soberly
In parliament,
To you a simple poet's pray'rs
Are humbly sent.

Alas! my *roopet*† muse is *hearse!* — croupy hoarse
Your Honors' hearts wi' grief '*twad* pierce, — it would
To see her sittin on her arse
Low i' the dust,
And *scriechin* out prosaic verse, — screeching
An' like to *brust!* — burst

Tell them wha *hae* the chief direction, — have
Scotland an' me's in great affliction,

---

* This was written before the Act anent the Scotch distilleries, of session 1786, for which Scotland and the Author return their most grateful thanks.—*R. B.* In 1785 loud complaints were made by the Scotch distillers respecting the vexatious and oppressive manner in which, at the instigation of London distillers, the excise laws were enforced at their establishments. Many distillers forsook the trade, and the price of barley was affected, while illicit distillation increased alarmingly. In 1786 an act was passed discontinuing the duties on low wines and spirits, and substituting an annual tax on stills according to their capacity. This act gave general satisfaction. This poem is an expression of the poet's feeling in regard to fiscal oppression, and was written end of 1785 or beginning of 1786, during the controversy.—J. H.

† Roopit means affected with that peculiar hoarseness, resulting from overstraining the voice, and is from the same root as the Dutch *roepen*, to cry aloud, and Scotch *roup*, an auction. His muse had been "scriechin" so long that she became "roopit."—J. H.

E'er sin' they laid that curst restriction
On *aqua-vitæ;* whisky
An' rouse them up to strong conviction,
An' move their pity.

Stand forth, an' tell yon Premier youth *
The honest, open, naked truth:
Tell him o' mine an' Scotland's *drouth*, thirst
His servants humble:
The muckle deevil blaw ye south,
If ye dissemble!

Does ony great man *glunch* an' gloom? frown
Speak out, an' never *fash* your thumb! trouble
Let posts an' pensions sink or *soom* swim
Wi' them wha grant them;
If honestly they *canna* come, cannot
Far better want them.

In gath'rin votes you were *na* slack; not
Now stand as tightly by your *tack:* bargain
Ne'er *claw* your *lug*, an' *fidge* your back, scratch ear / shrug
An' hum an' haw;
But raise your arm, an' tell your *crack* story
Before them a'.

Paint Scotland *greetin owre* her *thrissle;* weeping o'er / thistle
Her *mutchin stowp* as *toom's* a whissle; whisky flagon / empty as
An' d—mn'd excisemen in a bussle,
Seizin a *stell*, still
Triumphant, crushin't like a mussel,
Or limpet shell.†

---

*Mr. Pitt, who was premier at the age of twenty-five. He was born in the same year with Burns—1759.—J. H.

†At this time Burns had no expectation he was to be an exciseman himself, and a very inflexible one (except to struggling poverty) at that.—J. H.

Then, on the *tither* hand, present her— other
A blackguard smuggler right behint her,
An' *cheek-for-chow*, a *chuffie* vintner, cheek by jowl / bloated
Colleaguing join. conspiring
Pickin' her *pouch* as bare as winter pocket
Of a' kind coin.

Is there, that bears the name o' Scot,
But feels his heart's bluid rising hot,
To see his poor *auld* mither's pot old
Thus *dung* in staves, knocked
An' plunder'd o' her hindmost groat,*
By gallows knaves?

Alas! I'm but a nameless wight,
Trode i' the mire † out o' sight!
But could I like Montgomeries ‡ fight,
Or *gab* like Boswell, § speak briskly / out
There's some *sark-necks* I *wad* draw tight, shirt-collars / would
An' tie some hose well.

God bless your Honors! can ye see't—
The kind, auld, *cantie carlin greet*, cheerful old / wife weep
An' no get warmly to your feet,
An' *gar them* hear it. compel them
An' tell them wi' a patriot-heat,
Ye *winna* bear it? will not

Some o' you nicely *ken* the laws, know
To round the period an' pause,
An' with rhetoric clause on clause
To mak harangues;
Then echo thro' *Saint Stephen's wa's* House of / Parliament
Auld Scotland's wrangs.

---

* A Scotch coin reproduced in the English fourpenny bit.—J. H.

† The rhythm here demands that this monosyllable be enunciated as two syllables.

‡ The Montgomeries of Coilsfield.

§ Boswell of Auchinleck, an Ayrshire laird, and the biographer of Johnson.

Dempster,* a true blue † Scot I'se warran ;
Thee, *aith*-detesting, chaste Kilkerran ; ‡ — oath
An' that *glib-gabbet* Highland baron, — ready-tongued
The Laird o' Graham, §
An' ane, a *chap* that's d—mn'd *auldfarran* — fellow, sagacious
Dundas his name :‖

Erskine, a *spunkie Norland billie* ;** — spirited Northern gentleman
True Campbells, Frederick and Ilay ; ††
An' Livistone, the *bauld* Sir Willie ; ‡‡ — bold
An' mony *ithers*, — others
Whom auld Demosthenes or Tully
Might own for *brithers*. — brothers

See, *sodger* Hugh,§§ my watchman — soldier
stented, ‖‖ — bound
If bardies e'er are represented ;
I ken if that your sword were wanted,
Ye'd lend a hand ;
But when there's ought to say *anent* it, — in regard to
Ye're at a stand. — you are at a stand-still

Arouse, my boys ! exert your mettle,
To get auld Scotland back her *kettle;* — whisky-still

---

* George Dempster of Dunnichen, M. P.

† Blue was the color of the flag borne by the Covenanters when they took the field against Charles II., in his attempt to force episcopacy on Scotland. Hence the phrase : "A true-blue Presbyterian."—J. H.

‡ Sir Adam Ferguson, M. P.

§ Marquis of Graham, afterwards Duke of Montrose.

‖ Right Hon. Henry Dundas, M. P.

** Thomas, afterwards Lord Erskine.

†† Lord Frederick Campbell, M. P., brother of the Duke of Argyle, and Ilay Campbell, Lord Advocate, afterwards Lord President.

‡‡ Sir Wm. Augustus Cunningham, Baronet, of Livingston, for some time sat as M. P. for the county of Linlithgow, where he had his estate, which he was afterwards compelled to sell in consequence of incurring electioneering debts.

§§ Col. Hugh Montgomerie, afterwards Earl of Eglintoun. He was "stented" to be "Burns' watchman," as representing Ayrshire in Parliament, so that Burns, as an Ayrshire man, had a claim on him as his representative, "if bardies e'er are represented."—J. H.

‖‖ See note on *Stents*, p. 205.

Or faith! I'll *wad* my new pleugh-pettle, * wager
Ye'll see't *or lang*, ere long
She'll teach you wi' a *reekin whittle*, sword smoking with blood
Anither sang.

This *while* she's been in *crankous* mood, sometime ticklish
Her lost Militia † fir'd her bluid;
(Deil nor they never mair do guid,
Play'd her that *pliskie!*) ill-turn
An' now she's like to rin *red-wud* mad-angry
About her whisky.

An' L—d! if ance they *pit her till't*, drive her to it
Her tartan petticoat she'll kilt,
An' *durk* an' pistol at her belt, dirk
She'll tak the streets,
An' rin her *whittle* to the hilt, sword
I' the first she meets!

For G—d-sake, sirs! then speak her fair,
An' *straik* her *cannie* wi' the hair, stroke gently
An' to the *muckle house* repair, great house (*parliament*)
Wi' instant speed,
An' strive, wi' a' your wit an' *lear*, learning
To get *remead*. redress

Yon ill-tongu'd tinkler, Charlie Fox,
May taunt you wi' his jeers an' mocks;
But *gie him 't het*, my hearty cocks! give it him hot
E'en *cowe* the *cadie*! ‡ awe fellow
An' send him to his dicing box
An' sportin lady.

---

* Implement for cleaning the plough of clods, etc.

† The Scots Militia Bill was burdened with conditions which liberal Members would not accept, and it was opposed and lost.

‡ A cadie or caddie was one who gained a livelihood by running messages, especially in the streets of Edinburgh; hence the word came to be a synonym for a low fellow.—J. H.

Tell yon *guid bluid* o' auld Boconnock's,* good blood
I'll be his debt twa mashlum bannocks, †
An' drink his health in auld Nanse Tinnock's ‡
Nine times a week,
If he some scheme, like tea an' *winnocks*,§ windows
Wad kindly seek.

Could he some commutation broach,
I'll pledge my *aith* in guid *braid* Scotch, oath broad
He needna fear their foul reproach
Nor erudition.
Yon *mixtie-maxtie*, queer hotch-potch, badly mixed
The "Coalition."‖

Auld Scotland has a *raucle* tongue; rough and reckless
She's just a devil wi' a *rung;* bludgeon
An' if she promise auld or young
To tak their part,
Tho' by the neck she should be strung,
She'll no desert.

And now, ye chosen Five-and-Forty,**
May still your mither's heart support ye;
Then, tho' a minister grow *dorty*, sulky
An' kick your place,
Ye'll snap your fingers, poor an' hearty,
Before his face.

---

* Pitt was a grandson of Robert Pitt of Boconnock in Cornwall. Pitt (as well as his father, the Earl of Chatham) was a favorite of Burns. Later, we shall see, he changed, and, on one occasion, Pitt's health being given as a toast, Burns, to his own injury, suggested to substitute a health to Washington.—J. H.

† Mashlum bannocks or scones are made of a mash of various kinds of grain.

‡ A worthy old hostess of the Author's in Mauchline, where he sometimes studies politics over a glass of gude auld "Scotch Drink."—*R. B.* Nine times a week is, of course, a poetical exaggeration, besides it is to be remembered the potations in the old lady's house were generally of home-brewed ale, of which both lads and lasses were wont to be partakers. The remark made in reference to Burns' temperance in the note to "Scotch Drink" applies equally to this piece.—J. H.

§ Some duty was taken off tea, and the loss made up by a window-tax.

‖ See note p. 63.

** Scotland was allowed by the Act of Union just forty-five representatives in the House of Commons, and sixteen representative peers in the House of Lords. —J. H.

God bless your Honors, a' your days,
Wi' sowps o' kail and brats o' claise,*
In spite o' a' the thievish *kaes*, jack-daws
That haunt *St. Jamie's!* Court of St. James
Your humble poet sings an' prays,
While Rab his name is.

POSTSCRIPT.

LET half-starv'd slaves in warmer skies
See future wines, rich-clust'ring, rise;
Their lot auld Scotland ne'er envies,
But, *blythe* and frisky, cheerful
She eyes her freeborn, martial boys
Tak aff their whisky. take off

What tho' their Phœbus kinder warms,
While fragrance blooms and beauty charms,
When wretches range, in famish'd swarms,
The scented groves;
Or, hounded forth, dishonor arms
In hungry droves!

Their gun's a burthen on their *shouther;* shoulder
They *downa bide* the stink o' *powther;* cannot stand / powder
Their *bauldest* thought's a *hank'ring swither* boldest / hesitating doubt
To stand or rin,
Till *skelp*—a shot—they're aff, a' *throw'ther* crack / through-other
To save their skin.

But bring a Scotchman frae his hill,
Clap in his cheek a Highland gill, stow
Say, such is royal George's will,
An' there's the foe!
He has nae thought but how to kill
Twa at a blow.

---

*Sups of kale-broth and duds of clothes.—J. H.

Nae *cauld*, faint-hearted doubtings tease him; cold
Death comes, wi' fearless eye he sees him;
Wi' bluidy hand a welcome gies him;
An' when he *fa's*, falls
His latest draught o' breathin *lea'es* him leaves
In faint huzzas.

Sages their solemn *een* may *steek*, eyes shut
An' raise a philosophic *reek*, smoke
An' physically causes seek,
In clime an' season;
But tell me whisky's name in Greek,
I'll tell the reason.

Scotland, my auld, respected mither!
Tho' *whiles* ye moistify your *leather*, sometimes skin
Till, whare ye sit on *craps* o' heather, bunches
Ye *tine* your dam; lose
Freedom and whisky *gang* thegither! go
Tak aff your dram!

[In this piece, our poet returns, with increased poetic fervor, to the theme of "Scotch Drink." We of this generation are apt to wonder why, in the opening line, he addresses "Irish lords" instead of those of our own Scotland, when hailing the "Scotch representatives in the House of Commons:" but the eldest sons of Scottish peers not being eligible for election in Scotland, while the sons of Irish peers were eligible, seems to have been felt by Burns as a national affront. (It is probable that some of this class actually represented Scotch constituencies. We must therefore regard the prominence here given to "Irish lords" as a pointed stroke of satire. The question was tried by Lord Daer, son of the Earl of Selkirk, during the poet's lifetime, both in the Court of Session and House of Lords, and decided against him. Let it be noted that the poem opens with a compliment to sobriety in the person of the Irish peers and other Scottish representatives.—J. H.)

The fifteenth stanza was excluded by the author in published copies,—for what reason Gilbert Burns could not say: but clearly it was to avoid giving offence to the gallant soldier by the allusion to his deficiency as a speaker. The closing verse, which Currie approvingly characterises as a "most laughable, but most irreverent

apostrophe," underwent, in the edition of 1794, a change which has been rejected by every editor of the poet. The innovation seems to have been suggested by Mr. Alexander Fraser Tytler.

"Till when ye speak, ye ablin's blether,
Yet, deil mak matter!
Freedom and whisky gang thegither,
Tak aff your whitter!"]

THE ORDINATION.

(EDINBURGH ED., 1787.)

"For sense, they little owe to frugal Heav'n—
To please the mob they hide the little giv'n."

KILMARNOCK *wabsters*, *fidge* an' *claw*,*
An' pour your *creeshie nations;* greasy tribes
An' ye wha leather *rax* an' draw, stretch
Of a' denominations;
Swith! to the Laigh Kirk, ane an' a',†
An' there tak up your stations;
Then aff to Begbie's‡ in a *raw*, row
An' pour divine libations
For joy this day.

Curst "Common-sense," that imp o' h-ll,
Cam in wi' Maggie Lauder:§
But Oliphant‖ aft made her yell,
An' Russell** sair misca'd her:

---

* Fidget and scratch—signs of pleasant excitement among hand-loom weavers. Kilmarnock was then a town of three or four thousand inhabitants, largely employed in the manufacture of carpets, bonnets, etc., and (Chambers says) in the preparation of leather.—J. H.

† Off, to the Low Church, one and all—JH.

‡ Begbie's Inn, in a small court near the Laigh Kirk.

§ Alluding to a scoffing ballad which was made on the admission of the late reverend and worthy Mr. Lindsay to the "Laigh Kirk."—*R. B.*

‖ Rev. James Oliphant, minister of Chapel of Ease, Kilmarnock, from 1764 to 1774.

** Rev. John Russell of Kilmarnock, one of the "Twa Herds." He was successor to Oliphant. See notes pp. 83, 129.

This day Mackinlay * taks the flail,†
  An' he's the boy will *blaud* her! — spank
He'll clap a *shangan* on her tail, — tin kettle
  An' set the bairns to *daud* her — bespatter
    Wi' dirt this day.

Mak haste an' turn King David *owre*, — over
  An' *lilt* wi' holy clangor; — sing
O' *double verse* come gie us four, — an eight line stanza
  An' *skirl up* "the Bangor:" ‡ — strike up shrilly
This day the kirk kicks up a *stoure*, — dust (*disturbance*)
  Nae mair the knaves shall *wrang* her; — no more wrong
For Heresy is in her pow'r,
  And gloriously she'll *whang* her, — thrash
    Wi' pith this day.

Come, let a proper text be read,
  An' touch it aff wi' vigor,
How graceless Ham § *leugh* at his dad, — laughed
  Which made Canaan a nigger;
Or Phineas ‖ drove the murdering blade,
  Wi' whore-abhorring rigor;
Or Zipporah,** the *scauldin jad*, — scolding jade
  Was like a *bluidy teeger* — bloody tigress
    I' th' inn that day.

There, try his mettle on the creed,
  And bind him down wi' caution,
That stipend is a carnal weed
  He taks but for the fashion;
And *gie* him o'er the flock to feed, — give
  And punish each transgression;

---

* Rev. James Mackinlay, subject of the present poem, ordained 6th April, 1786. As a preacher, he became "a great favorite of the million."

† Begins to preach and to thrash heresy.

‡ A favorite psalm tune.

§ Genesis ix. 22.—*R. B.*

‖ Numbers xxv. 8.—*R. B.*

** Exodus iv. 25.—*R. B.*

Especial, rams that cross the breed,
  Gie them sufficient threshin ;
    Spare them nae day.

Now *auld* Kilmarnock, cock thy tail, old
  An' toss thy horns fu' *canty;* merry
Nae mair thou'lt *rowte out-owre* the dale low over
  Because thy pasture's scanty ;
For lapfu's large o' gospel *kail* greens
  Shall fill thy crib in plenty,
An' *runts* o' grace the pick an' *wale* kale-stalks choice
  No *gi'en* by way o' dainty, given
    But *ilka* day.* every

Nae mair by "Babel's streams" we'll weep,
  To think upon our "Zion ;"
And *hing* our fiddles up to sleep, hang
  Like baby-*clouts* a-dryin ! cloths
Come, screw the pegs wi' tunefu' *cheep*, chirp
  And o'er the *thairms* be tryin ; strings
Oh, rare! to see our *elbucks wheep*, elbows whip
  And *a'* like lamb-tails flyin ! all
    Fu' fast this day ! right

Lang, Patronage,† wi' rod o' *airn*, iron
  Has *shor'd* the Kirk's undoin ; threatened
As lately Fenwick, sair *forfairn*, distressed
  Has proven to its ruin :‡
Our patron, honest man ! Glencairn,§
  He saw mischief was brewin ;

---

* Kilmarnock is here represented as an animal of the cow-kind about to be abundantly cared for by her new herd ; and is exhorted to manifest her exultation accordingly.—J. H.

† See note on Patronage—"Twa Dogs," p. 207.

‡ Allusion is here made to the long disputed settlement of Rev. Wm. Boyd, as minister to the parish of Fenwick, against whom the people were prejudiced as being a "Moderate" or member of the "New Light" party. He was ultimately settled in 1782 and became an acceptable minister.—J. H.

§ Ear' of Glencairn.

An' like a *godly*, *elect bairn*, child of grace
He's *waled* us out a true ane, selected
And sound this day.

Now Robertson * harangue *nae mair*, no more
But *steek* your *gab* for ever; close mouth
Or try the wicked town of Ayr,
For there they'll think you clever:
Or, nae reflection on your *lear*, learning
Ye may commence a shaver;
Or to the Netherton † repair,
An' turn a carpet-weaver,
Aff-hand this day. right away

Mu'trie ‡ and you were just a match,
We never had sic twa drones;
Auld "Hornie" did the *Laigh Kirk* watch, the D—l / low church
Just like a winkin *baudrons*, cat
And ay he catch'd the *tither* wretch, tother
To fry them in his *caudrons;* caldrons
But now his Honor *maun detach*, must make off
Wi' a' his brimstone squadrons,
Fast, fast this day.

See, see auld Orthodoxy's *faes* foes
She's swingein thro' the city!
Hark, how the nine-tail'd cat she plays!
I vow it's *unco* pretty: uncommonly
There, Learning, with his Greekish face,
Grunts out some Latin ditty;

---

* Rev. John Robertson, colleague of Dr. Mackinlay, ordained 1765, died 1798. He belonged to the "Common-sense" order of preachers.

† A district of Kilmarnock, where carpet weaving was largely carried on.

‡ The Rev. John Multrie, a "Moderate" whom Mackinlay succeeded.

And "Common-sense" is *gaun*, she says, going
To mak to Jamie Beattie *
Her plaint this day.

But there's Morality himsel,
Embracing all opinions;
Hear, how he *gies* the *tither* yell, gives the other
Between his *twa* companions! two
See, how she peels the skin an' *fell*, hide
As *ane* were peelin onions! one
Now there, they're packed aff to h-ll,
An' banish'd our dominions,
Henceforth this day.

O happy day! rejoice, rejoice!
Come *bouse about* the porter! sit round carousing
Morality's demure decoys
Shall here *nae mair* find quarter: no more
Mackinlay, Russell, are the boys
That heresy can torture;
They'll gie her on a *rape* a *hoyse*, rope hoist
And *cowe* her measure shorter cut
By th' head some day.

Come, bring the tither *mutchkin* in, pint of whisky
And here's—for a conclusion—
To ev'ry "new-light" † mother's son,
From this time forth, confusion!
If mair they *deave* us wi' their *din* deafen noise
Or patronage intrusion,
We'll light a *spunk*, and ev'ry skin, match
We'll *rin them aff in fusion*, melt them off
Like oil some day.

---

* The poet, and author of an "Essay on Truth," who was reckoned to side with the moderate party in church matters.

† A cant-phrase in the West of Scotland, for those religious opinions which Dr. Taylor of Norwich has defended so strenuously.—*R. B.* See p. 119.

[The poet's letter to Richmond of 17th February, 1786, intimates that the present poem had already been composed: but it is a curious fact that Dr. Mackinlay's ordination did not take place till 6th April thereafter.

Both in this poem and its companion satire, "The Holy Fair," a personality named "Common-Sense" is introduced. This means the "new light," or Arminian doctrine that began to be observable in the teaching of some Scotch pulpits, about the middle of last century, and which Burns lent all his powers to promote. Here he retraces the history of the "Laigh Kirk" of Kilmarnock so far back as the year 1764, and shows that a series of consecutive appointments of "New Light" ministers then commenced with the Rev. William Lindsay. He refers to "a scoffing ballad" of that date which more than hinted that the minister obtained that appointment through the influence of his wife, a Miss Margaret Lauder, who had formerly been housekeeper to and in high favor with the patron, the Earl of Glencairn. On the present occasion, however, the Earl yielded to the popular wishes, and the refreshing "old light" again spread its halo around the Laigh Kirk. (Mackinlay survived till 1841; into his personal history there is no reason to enter. His son, the Rev. James Mackinlay, died in Edinburgh so recently as June, 1876. "Poetically," says Waddell, "the ordination is remarkable as an illustration of the poet's most caustic style, and of his inimitable gift of discomfiting antagonists by the quiet reproduction of their own views." Historically, it is interesting as a record of the state of ecclesiastical polity at the time, and of the discussion of questions which resulted in the Disruption of the Church.—J. H.)

The following variations on stanzas fourth and fifth are found in an early manuscript of this poem:—

Come *wale* a text, a proper verse, — select
  And touch it aff wi' vigor,
How Ham *leugh* at his father's a— — laughed
  Which made Canaan a nigger;
Or Phineas did fair Cozbie pierce
  Wi' whore-abhorring rigor;
Or Zipporah, wi' scaulding hearse, &c.

There, try his mettle on the creed,
  Wi' *form'la* and confession; — formula
And lay your hands upon his head,
  And seal his high commission,
The holy flock to *tent* and feed, — guard
  And punish each transgression, &c.]

EPISTLE TO JAMES SMITH.

[KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.]

"Friendship, mysterious cement of the soul!
Sweet'ner of Life, and solder of Society!
I owe thee much———"

BLAIR.

DEAR SMITH, the *slee'st*, *pawkie* thief, slyest roguish
That e'er attempted stealth or *rief!* robbery
Ye surely hae some warlock-*breef* spell
Owre human hearts; over
For ne'er a bosom yet was *prief* proof
Against your arts.

For me, I swear by sun an' moon,
An' ev'ry star that *blinks aboon*, twinkles above
Ye've cost me twenty pair o' *shoon*, shoes
Just *gaun* to see you; going
An' ev'ry *ither* pair that's done, other
Mair taen I'm wi' you. more captivated

That auld, capricious *carlin*, Nature, dame
To mak amends for *scrimpet* stature, stinted
She's turn'd you off, a human-creature
On her first plan,
And in her freaks, on ev'ry feature
She's wrote the Man.

Just now I've *taen* the fit o' rhyme, taken
My *barmie noddle's* working prime, yeasty brain is
My fancy *yerket* up sublime, worked
Wi' hasty summon:
Hae ye a leisure-moment's time have
To hear what's comin?

Some rhyme a *neibor's* name to lash ; neighbor
Some rhyme (vain thought !) for needfu' cash :
Some rhyme to court the countra *clash*, gossip
An' *raise a din ;* make a noise
For me, an aim I never *fash ;* trouble myself about
I rhyme for fun.

The star that rules my luckless lot,
Has fated me the russet coat,
An' damn'd my fortune to the *groat ;* small coin / four-pence
But, in requit,
Has blest me with a random-shot
O' countra wit.

This while my notion's taen a *sklent*, for some time back / slant
To try my fate in guid, black *prent;* print (*to publish*)
But still the *mair* I'm that way bent, more
Something cries "*Hoolie* ! softly
I *red* you, honest man, *tak tent !* counsel be cautious
Ye'll *shaw* your folly ; show

There's ither poets, much your betters,
Far seen in Greek, deep men o' letters, profoundly / learned
Hae thought they had ensur'd their debtors, have
A' future ages :
Now moths deform, in shapeless tatters,
Their unknown pages."

Then farewell hopes of laurel-boughs,
To garland my poetic brows !
Henceforth I'll rove where busy ploughs
Are whistlin *thrang*, diligently
An' teach the lanely heights an' *howes* valleys
My rustic sang.

I'll wander on, wi' *tentless* heed careless
How never-halting moments speed,

Till fate shall snap the brittle thread;
Then, all unknown,
I'll lay me with th' inglorious dead,
Forgot and gone!

But why o' death begin a tale?
Just now we're living sound an' hale;
Then top and maintop crowd the sail,
Heave Care o'er-side!
And large, before Enjoyment's gale,
Let's tak the tide.

This life, sae far's I understand,
Is *a'* enchanted fairy-land, all
Where Pleasure is the magic-wand,
That, wielded right,
Maks hours like minutes, hand in hand,
Dance by *fu'* light. full

The magic-wand then let us wield;
For, ance that five-an'-forty's *speel'd*, climbed
See, crazy, weary, joyless *eild*, old age
Wi' wrinkl'd face,
Comes *hostin*, *hirplin owre* the field, coughing, limping over
Wi' creepin pace. with

When *ance* life's day draws near the *gloamin*, once twilight
Then fareweel vacant, careless roamin;
An' fareweel chearfu' tankards foamin,
An' social noise:
An' fareweel dear, deluding woman,
The joy of joys!

O Life! how pleasant, in thy morning,
Young Fancy's rays the hills adorning!

Cold-pausing Caution's lesson scorning,
We frisk away,
Like school-boys, at th' expected warning,
To joy an' play.

We wander there, we wander here,
We eye the rose upon the brier,
Unmindful that the thorn is near,
Among the leaves ;
And tho' the puny wound appear,
Short while it grieves.*

Some, lucky, find a flow'ry spot,
For which they never toil'd nor *swat;* sweated
They drink the sweet and eat the fat,
But care or pain ; without
And haply eye the barren hut
With high disdain.

With steady aim, some fortune chase ;
Keen hope does ev'ry sinew brace ;
Thro' fair, thro' foul, they urge the race,
An' seize the prey :
Then *cannie*, in some *cozie* place, quietly snug
They close the day.

And others, like your humble servan'
Poor *wights! nae* rules nor roads observin, fellows no
To right or left eternal swervin,
They zig-zag on ;
Till, curst with age, obscure an' starvin,
They *aften* groan. often

---

* "Where can we find a more exhilarating enumeration of the enjoyments of youth contrasted with their successive extinction as age advances, than in the *Epistle to James Smith?*"—PROFESSOR WALKER.

Alas! what bitter toil an' straining—
But truce with peevish, poor complaining!
Is fortune's fickle Luna waning?
E'en let her *gang!* go
Beneath what light she has remaining,
Let's sing our sang.

My pen I here fling to the door,
And kneel, ye Pow'rs! and warm implore,
"Tho' I should wander Terra o'er,
In all her climes,
Grant me but this, I ask no more,
Ay *rowth o'* rhymes. abundance of

"Gie *dreeping* roasts to *countra lairds*, dripping country land-owners
Till icicles *hing frae* their beards; hang from
Gie fine *braw claes* to fine life-guards, gay clothes
And maids of honor;
An' *yill* an' whisky *gie* to *cairds*, ale give tinkers
Until they *sconner*. are nauseated

"A title, Dempster* merits it;
A garter *gie* to Willie Pitt;† give
Gie wealth to some be-ledger'd cit, give
In cent. per cent.;
But give me real, sterling wit,
And I'm content.

"While ye are pleas'd to keep me hale,
I'll sit down o'er my scanty meal,
Be't water-brose or *muslin-kail*, lenten soup
Wi' chearfu' face,
As lang's the Muses *dinna* fail do not
To say the grace."

---

* George Dempster of Dunnichen, M. P., a distinguished patriot and conspicuous orator in Parliament, referred to in "The Author's Earnest Cry," p. 216.

† We have already referred to the poet's partiality at this period for both Pitt and his father, the Earl of Chatham.—J. H.

An anxious *e'e* I never throws — eye
Behint my *lug*, or *by* my nose;* — ear past
I *jouk* beneath Misfortune's blows — dodge
As weel's I may;
Sworn foe to sorrow, care, and prose,
I rhyme away.

O ye *douce* folk that live by rule, — quietly decent
Grave, tideless-blooded, calm an' cool,
Compar'd wi' you—O fool! fool! fool!
How much unlike!
Your hearts are just a standing pool,
Your lives a *dyke!* — sod fence

Nae hair-brain'd, sentimental traces
In your unletter'd, nameless faces!
In arioso trills and graces
Ye never stray;
But gravissimo,† solemn basses
Ye hum away.

Ye are sae grave, nae doubt ye're wise;
Nae *ferly* tho' ye do despise — wonder
The *hairum-scairum*, *ram-stam* boys, — thoughtless and precipitate
The rattling squad:
I see ye upward cast your eyes—
Ye *ken the road!* — know the way (*to heaven*)

Whilst I—but I shall *haud* me there, — hold (*stop*)
Wi' you I'll scarce *gang* ony where— — go
Then, Jamie, I shall say *nae mair*, — no more
But *quat* my sang, — quit
Content wi' you to mak a pair,
Whare'er I *gang*. — go

---

* Never cast an eye behind or before: never trouble myself with past or future. —J. H.

† Accent on penult.

[James Smith, the person here addressed, was a shopkeeper in Mauchline, short of stature, but vigorous in mind. From what we have said of him (p. 157, *supra*) as the "wag in Mauchline," celebrated in one of Burns' cleverest epigrams, and as "fiscal" of the "Court of Equity" held at the Whitefoord Arms Inn, the reader will need little more information regarding him. He stood Burns' friend "through thick and thin," when he got into difficulties early in the Spring of 1786, in relation to his love-alliance with Jean Armour. The first intimation of trouble regarding that affair is given in the poet's letter to Richmond, 17th February, 1786, in which he says: "I have some very important news with respect to myself, not the most agreeable—news that I am sure you cannot guess, but I shall give you the particulars another time. I am extremely happy with Smith; he is the only friend I have now in Mauchline." Smith afterwards had a calico-printing manufactory at Avon, near Linlithgow, but proved unsuccessful. It was his fate to end life sooner even than our poet, and in the very place where Burns at one time expected to end *his*—the West Indies.]

(This is a specimen of these epistles, the style of which was suggested to Burns by the corresponding epistles of Hamilton of Gilbertfield, Allan Ramsay, and his favorite Fergusson. "A type of a much higher kind," says Waddell, "although certainly unknown to Burns, is recognizable in the Odes of Horace. The metre itself most favorite with him, although not exactly the same, is very similar to that of Burns in his Epistles; but the similarity of style, in thought, in sententious philosophy, in epigrammatic reflection, in discursive sally, converting themselves insensibly to proverbial utterances, is so remarkable that it could be fairly illustrated only by parallel quotations of entire passages." . . . Little does "the scholar, engrossed with classical lore, . . . imagine that all this philosophy (of Horace) has been reproduced and broadened by an Ayrshire ploughman, in a rude northern dialect—diversified by endless variety of observation, enriched with a geniality of humor of which Horace was incapable, and sweetened with a tenderness of sympathy absolutely foreign to his selfish Roman nature."—J. H.)

THE VISION.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

DUAN FIRST.*

THE sun had clos'd the winter day,
The curlers *quat* their roarin play,† — quitted
And hunger'd *maukin taen* her way, — hare taken
To *kail-yards* green, — kitchen gardens
While faithless *snaws ilk* step betray — snows each
Whare she has been.

The thresher's weary *flingin-tree*, — flail
The *lee-lang* day had tired me; — whole long
And when the day had closed his *e'e* — eye
Far i' the west,
Ben i' the spence,‡ right pensivelie,
I *gaed* to rest. — went

There, lanely by the *ingle-cheek*, — fireside
I sat and ey'd the *spewing reek*, — smoke vomiting forth
That fill'd, wi' *hoast*-provoking *smeek*, — cough smoke
The auld clay *biggin;* — building
An' heard the restless *rattons* squeak — rats
About the *riggin.* — thatched roof

All in this *mottie*, misty clime. — mucky
I backward mus'd on wasted time,

---

* Duan, a term of Ossian's for the different divisions of a digressive poem. See his Cath-Loda, vol. 2, of M'Pherson's translation.—*R. B.*

† Not only from the hilarity of the game, but from the roaring sound of the curling-stone along the hollow ice.

‡ In Scotland formerly the ordinary farm-house had but two apartments on the ground floor, the *but*, or outer apartment or kitchen, and the *ben*, or inner apartment, spence or parlor. The farm-house of Mossgiel was of this description. *Ben* is here used as a preposition—within.—J. H.

How I had spent my youthfu' prime,
An' done naething,
But stringing *blethers* up in rhyme, nonsense
For fools to sing.

Had I to guid advice but *harket*, hearkenec
I might, by this, hae led a market,*
Or strutted in a bank and *clarket* clerked
My cash-account;
While here, half-mad, half-fed, half-*sarket*, shirted
Is a' th' amount.

I started, mutt'ring "blockhead! *coof!*" ass
An' heav'd on high my *wauket loof* toil-hardened palm
To swear by a' yon starry roof,
Or some rash *aith*, oath
That I henceforth *wad* be rhyme-proof would
Till my last breath—

When click! the string the *snick* did draw; latch
An' *jee!* the door *gaed* to the wa'; open went
An' by my *ingle-lowe* I saw, flame of my fire
Now *bleezin* bright, blazing
A tight, *outlandish hizzie*, *braw* foreign-looking female fine
Come full in sight.

Ye need na doubt, I *held my whisht;* was still
The infant *aith*, half-form'd, was crusht; oath
I glowr'd as eerie's I'd been dusht,†
In some wild glen;
When sweet, like modest Worth, she blusht,
An' stepped *ben*. in

---

* Farmers of especial wealth and influence with their class are said to "lead the markets."—J. H.

† Affected with mysterious awe, I stared as if I were stupefied and speechless with amazement.—J. H.

Green, slender, leaf-clad holly-boughs
Were twisted, gracefu', round her brows;
I took her for some Scottish Muse,
By that same token;
And come to stop those reckless vows,
Would soon been broken.

A "hair-brain'd, sentimental trace" *
Was strongly markèd in her face;
A wildly-witty, rustic grace
Shone full upon her;
Her eye, ev'n turn'd on empty space,
Beam'd keen with honor.†

Down flow'd her robe, a tartan sheen,
Till half a leg was *scrimply* seen; barely
An' such a leg! my bonie Jean ‡
Could only peer it;
Sae *straught*, sae taper, tight an' *clean*— straight / well-made
Nane else came near it.

Her mantel large, of greenish hue,
My gazing wonder chiefly drew;
Deep lights and shades, bold-mingling, threw
A lustre grand;
And seem'd, to my astonish'd view,
A well-known land.

---

*A quotation from his own words in the preceding epistle to James Smith, page 232.

†This couplet was a great favorite with Dr. Chalmers, who referred to it as the description of an eye too divine for fallen humanity to possess.

‡"My bonie Jean." About the month of January or February 1786, when, as we conjecture, this poem was composed, these words must have stood as in the text. But when his poems were at the press, the author's irritation on her account caused him to alter the words to "my Bess, I ween,"—and so they stand in the Kilmarnock edition: but in 1787, that irritation having subsided, Jean was restored to her place of honor in the poem.

(When Burns was alienated from Jean Armour he became betrothed to Mary Campbell—his "Highland Mary." Why, then, did he not substitute her name for that of Jean? Burns' feeling of delicacy prevented this, and the very omission furnishes the best evidence of Mary's purity. His Bess and Jean had both compromised themselves; Mary never. She could not be named in connection with an allusion even suggestive of indelicacy.—J. H.)

Here, rivers in the sea were lost;
There, mountains to the skies were toss't:
Here, tumbling billows mark'd the coast,
With surging foam;
There, distant shone Art's lofty boast,
The lordly dome.

Here, Doon pour'd down his far-fetch'd floods;
There, well-fed Irwine stately *thuds;* sounds
Auld hermit Ayr *staw* thro' his woods, stole
On to the shore;
And many a lesser torrent scuds,
With seeming roar.*

Low, in a sandy valley spread,
An ancient borough rear'd her head;†
Still, as in Scottish story read,
She boasts a race
To ev'ry nobler virtue bred,
And polish'd grace.‡

[By stately tow'r, or palace fair,
Or ruins pendent in the air,
Bold stems of heroes, here and there,
I could discern;
Some seem'd to muse, some seem'd to dare,
With feature stern.

My heart did glowing transport feel,
To see a race heroic § wheel,

---

* Burns more than once complains (see p. 117) that while the Tay, Forth, Ettrick, Tweed and other Scottish streams flowed to the sea to the sound of music sweeter than their own, no one had sung the streams of Ayrshire.—J. H.

† Ayr, whose charter dates from the beginning of the thirteenth century.—J. H.

‡ Here, in the first edition, *Duan First* came to a close; the additional seven stanzas were appended in the second edition, apparently in compliment to Mrs. Dunlop and other influential friends of the author.

§ The descendants of Wallace, the Scottish patriot-hero.—J. H.

And brandish round the deep-dyed steel,
In sturdy blows;
While, back-recoiling, seem'd to reel
Their *suthron* foes. Southern or English

His Country's Saviour,* mark him well!
Bold Richardton's heroic swell;†
The chief, on Sark who glorious fell‡
In high command;
And he whom ruthless fates expel
His native land.

There, where a sceptr'd Pictish shade
Stalk'd round his ashes lowly laid, §
I mark'd a martial race, pourtray'd
In colors strong:
Bold, soldier-featur'd, undismay'd,
They strode along.

Thro' many a wild, romantic grove, ‖
Near many a hermit-fancied cove
(Fit haunts for friendship or for love,
In musing mood),
An aged Judge, I saw him rove,
Dispensing good.

---

* William Wallace.—*R. B.*

† Adam Wallace of Richardton, cousin to the immortal preserver of Scottish independence.—*R. B.*

‡ Wallace, laird of Craigie, who was second in command, under Douglas, Earl of Ormond, at the famous Battle on the banks of Sark, fought in 1448. The glorious victory was principally owing to the judicious conduct and intrepid valor of the gallant laird of Craigie, who died of his wounds after the action.—*R. B.*

§ Coilus, King of the Picts, from whom the district of Kyle is said to take its name, lies buried, as tradition says, near the family seat of the Montgomeries of Coilsfield, where his burial place is still shown.—*R. B.* See note on "Twa Dogs," p. 203.

‖ Barskimming, the seat of the Lord Justice-Clerk.—*R. B.* (Sir Thomas Miller of Glenlee, afterwards President of the Court of Session.)

With deep-struck, reverential awe,
The learned Sire and Son I saw : *
To nature's God, and Nature's law,
They gave their lore ;
This, all its source and end to draw,
That, to adore.

Brydon's brave ward † I well could spy,
Beneath old Scotia's smiling eye ;
Who call'd on Fame, low standing by,
To hand him on,
Where many a patriot-name on high,
And hero shone.]

DUAN SECOND.

With musing-deep, astonish'd stare,
I view'd the heavenly-seeming Fair ;
A whispering throb did witness bear
Of kindred sweet,
When with an elder sister's air
She did me greet.

"All hail ! my own inspirèd bard !
In me thy native Muse regard ;
Nor longer mourn thy fate is hard,
Thus poorly low ;
I come to give thee such reward,
As we bestow !

* Catrine, the seat of the late Doctor and present Professor Stewart.—*R. B.* The father of Dugald Stewart was eminent in Mathematics.

† Colonel Fullarton.—*R. B.* He had travelled under the care of Patrick Brydone, author of a well-known publication, "A Tour through Sicily and Malta." The Duke of Portland now owns Fullarton House and broad acres.

"Know, the great genius of this land
Has many a light aerial band,
Who, all beneath his high command,
Harmoniously,
As arts or arms they understand,
Their labors ply.

"They Scotia's race among them share:
Some fire the soldier on to dare;
Some rouse the patriot up to bare
Corruption's heart:
Some teach the bard—a darling care—
The tuneful art.

"'Mong swelling floods of reeking gore,
They, ardent, kindling spirits pour;
Or, 'mid the venal senate's roar,
They, *sightless*, stand unseen
To mend the honest patriot-lore,
And grace the hand.

"And when the bard, or hoary sage,
Charm or instruct the future age,
They bind the wild poetic rage
In energy,
Or point the inconclusive page
Full on the eye.*

"Hence, Fullarton, the brave and young;
Hence, Dempster's zeal-inspirèd tongue;†
Hence, sweet, harmonious Beattie sung
His 'Minstrel' lays;
Or tore, with noble ardor stung,
The sceptic's bays.

---

* This stanza was added in the second edition (1787).
† See note on Epistle to James Smith, see p. 231.

THE VISION—

"Down flow'd her robe, a tartan sheen,
Till half a leg was scrimply seen."

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"Down flow'd her robe, a tartan sheen,
Till half a leg was scrimply seen."

"To lower orders are assign'd
The humbler ranks of human-kind,
The rustic bard, the laboring hind,
The artisan;
All chuse, as various they're inclin'd
The various man.

"When yellow waves the heavy grain,
The threat'ning storm some strongly rein;
Some teach to meliorate the plain,
With tillage-skill;
And some instruct the shepherd-train,
Blythe o'er the hill. cheerful

"Some hint the lover's harmless wile;
Some grace the maiden's artless smile;
Some soothe the laborer's weary toil
For humble gains,
And make his cottage-scenes beguile
His cares and pains.

"Some, bounded to a district-space,
Explore at large man's infant race,
To mark the embryotic trace
Of rustic bard;
And careful note each opening grace,
A guide and guard.

"Of these am I—Coila my name:*
And this district as mine I claim,
Where once the Campbells,† chiefs of fame,
Held ruling pow'r:
I mark'd thy embryo-tuneful flame,
Thy natal hour.

---

* Burns acknowledges having obtained the idea of this visionary from the "Scota" of Alex. Ross, a Mearns poet, and author of a pastoral of some merit entitled *The Fortunate Shepherdess.* Ross must have read Gay to purpose.—J. H.

† The Loudon branch of the Campbells is here referred to.

"With future hope I oft would gaze
Fond, on thy little early ways,
Thy rudely caroll'd, chiming phrase,
In uncouth rhymes;
Fir'd at the simple, artless lays
Of other times.

"I saw thee seek the sounding shore,
Delighted with the dashing roar;
Or when the North his fleecy store
Drove thro' the sky,
I saw grim Nature's visage hoar
Struck thy young eye.

"Or when the deep green-mantled earth
Warm cherish'd ev'ry floweret's birth,
And joy and music pouring forth
In ev'ry grove;
I saw thee eye the general mirth
With boundless love.

"When ripen'd fields and azure skies
Call'd forth the reapers' rustling noise,
I saw thee leave their ev'ning joys,
And lonely stalk,
To vent thy bosom's swelling rise,
In pensive walk.

"When youthful love, warm-blushing, strong,
Keen-shivering, shot thy nerves along,
Those accents grateful to thy tongue,
Th' adorèd Name,
I taught thee how to pour in song,
To soothe thy flame.

"I saw thy pulse's maddening play,
Wild send thee Pleasure's devious way,
Misled by Fancy's meteor-ray,
By passion driven;
But yet the light that led astray
Was light from Heaven.

"I taught thy manners-painting strains,
The loves, the ways of simple swains,
Till now, o'er all my wide domains
Thy fame extends;
And some, the pride of Coila's plains,
Become thy friends.*

"Thou canst not learn, nor can I show,
To paint with Thomson's landscape glow;
Or wake the bosom-melting throe,
With Shenstone's art;
Or pour, with Gray, the moving flow
Warm on the heart.

"Yet, all beneath th' unrivall'd rose,
The lowly daisy sweetly blows;
Tho' large the forest's monarch throws
His army-shade,
Yet green the juicy hawthorn grows,
Adown the glade.

"Then never murmur nor repine;
Strive in thy humble sphere to shine;

---

* Burns enjoyed local fame even before he published his Kilmarnock edition. He gave copies of his poems freely around. In particular he committed many of them to the care of Mr. Aiken, Gavin Hamilton's advocate, and also tax collector, Ayr. (See INVENTORY). Mr. Aiken read them to all whom he thought likely to appreciate them, giving them the benefit of his elocution, which all acknowledge to have had a wonderful effect. Burns himself says, "Mr. Aiken read me into fame." We can thus see how his fame extended over "all Coila's wide domains."—J. H.

And trust me, not Potosi's mine,
Nor king's regard,
Can give a bliss o'ermatching thine,
A rustic bard.

"To give my counsels all in one,
Thy tuneful flame still careful fan:
Preserve the dignity of Man,
With soul erect;
And trust the Universal Plan
Will all protect.

"And wear thou this"—she solemn said,
And bound the holly round my head:
The polish'd leaves and berries red
Did rustling play;
And, like a passing thought, she fled
In light away.

[In a letter which Burns addressed to Mrs. Dunlop from Edinburgh, on 15th January, 1787, he enclosed the seven concluding stanzas of Duan first, as in the text, and wrote as follows:—"I have not composed anything on the great Wallace, except what you have seen in print, and the enclosed, which I will print in this edition. You will see I have mentioned some others of the name. When I composed my 'Vision' long ago, I had attempted a description of Kyle, of which the additional stanzas are a part, as it originally stood."

To another patroness—Mrs. Stewart, of Stair—he had presented a manuscript book of ten leaves, folio, containing, along with several early poems, a copy of the Vision. That copy embraces about twenty stanzas which he cancelled when he came to print the piece in his Kilmarnock volume. Seven of these, as we have seen, he restored in printing his second edition, and the remainder of the suppressed verses we now append. The ten leaves of the poet's handwriting just referred to are generally styled the "Stair manuscript." It was purchased by the late Mr. Dick, bookseller in Ayr, from the grandson of Mrs. Stewart, of Stair; and, since Mr. Dick's decease, it has been cut asunder and sold piecemeal by his representatives.

Referring to the suppressed stanzas of the 'Vision,' Chambers thus observes :—"It is a curious and valuable document—valuable for an unexpected reason, namely, its proving what might otherwise be doubted, that Burns was not incapable of writing weakly. The whole of the inedited stanzas are strikingly of this character. Perhaps there is, after all, a second and a greater importance in the document, as showing how, with the capability of writing ineffectively, his taste was so unerring as to prevent him from publishing a single line that was not fitted to command respect; for every one of the poor stanzas has been thrown out on sending the poem to the press."]

SUPPRESSED STANZAS OF "THE VISION."

(CHAMBERS, 1852.)

After eighteenth stanza of the text :—

WITH secret throes I marked that earth,
That cottage, witness of my birth;
And near I saw, bold issuing forth
In youthful pride,
A Lindsay race of noble worth,
Famed far and wide.

Where, hid behind a spreading wood,
An ancient Pict-built mansion stood,
I spied, among an angel brood,
A female pair;
Sweet shone their high maternal blood,
And father's air.*

An ancient tower† to memory brought
How Dettingen's bold hero fought;
Still, far from sinking into nought,
It owns a lord
Who far in western climates fought,
With trusty sword

Among the rest I well could spy
One gallant, graceful, martial boy,
The *soldier* sparkled in his eye,
A diamond water;
I blest that noble badge with joy
That owned me *frater*.‡

---

* Sundrum.—*R. B.* Hamilton of Sundrum was married to a sister of Colonel Montgomerie of Coilsfield.

† Stair.—*R. B.* That old mansion was then possessed by General Stewart and his lady, to whom the MS. was presented.

‡ Captain James Montgomerie, Master of St. James' Lodge, Tarbolton, to which the author has the honor to belong.—*R. B.*

After twentieth stanza of the text:—

Near by arose a mansion fine,*
The seat of many a muse divine;
Not rustic muses such as mine,
With holly crown'd,
But th' ancient, tuneful, laurell'd Nine,
From classic ground.

I mourn'd the card that Fortune dealt,
To see where bonie Whitefoords dwelt;†
But other prospects made me melt,
That village near;‡
There Nature, Friendship, Love, I felt,
Fond-mingling dear!

Hail! Nature's pang, more strong than Death!
Warm Friendship's glow, like kindling wrath!
Love, dearer than the parting breath
Of dying friend!
Not ev'n with life's wild devious path,
Your force shall end!

The Pow'r that gave the soft alarms
In blooming Whitefoord's rosy charms,
Still threats the tiny, feather'd arms,
The barbèd dart,
While lovely Wilhelminia warms
The coldest heart.§

After twenty-first stanza of the text:—

Where Lugar leaves his moorland plaid,‖
Where lately Want was idly laid,
I markèd busy, bustling Trade,
In fervid flame,
Beneath a Patroness's aid,
Of noble name.

Wild, countless hills I could survey,
And countless flocks as wild as they;
But other scenes did charms display,
That better please,
Where polish'd manners dwell with Gray,
In rural ease.**

Where Cessnock pours with gurgling sound;††
And Irwine, marking out the bound,

---

* Auchinleck.—*R. B.* † Ballochmyle. ‡ Mauchline.

§ A compliment to Miss Wilhelmina Alexander as successor, in that locality to Miss Maria Whitefoord.

‖ Cumnock.—*R. B.* ** Mr. Farquhar Gray.—*R. B.*

†† Auchinskieth.—*R. B.*

Enamor'd of the scenes around,
Slow runs his race,
A name I doubly honor'd found,*
With knightly grace.

Brydon's brave ward,† I saw him stand,
Fame humbly offering her hand,
And near, his kinsman's rustic band,‡
With one accord,
Lamenting their late blessed land
Must change its lord.

The owner of a pleasant spot,
Near sandy wilds, I last did note; §
A heart too warm, a pulse too hot
At times, o'erran;
But large in ev'ry feature wrote,
Appear'd, the Man.

The greater portion of the MS. of these "suppressed stanzas" is in the possession of Robert Jardine, Esq., of Castlemilk, Dumfriesshire.]

(The VISION is remarkable in various ways. Irrespective of its being a monument of Burns' creative genius, it shows us that he could already express himself with elegance and ease in pure English, as also that he had a just appreciation of his proper calling, and a modest confidence in his own powers and the place he was destined to occupy in the literature of his country. Be it observed that this poem was produced before the publication of his Kilmarnock edition, and therefore the voice of the general public had not yet endorsed him as the "bard of Caledonia." Stanza 18 of Duan 2 has been objected to as a too daring vindication of his errors. It may be so, yet the charge savors of ingratitude; for undoubtedly those very passions which led him astray contributed much to the vigor and unrivalled richness and sweetness of his songs. His own larks and linnets, thrushes and "merles," sang ever clearest and fullest in the halcyon months of spring, when they warbled to charm *their* dearies.—J. H.)

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* Caprington.—*R. B.*
† Colonel Fullarton (see note p. 239).—*R. B.*
‡ Dr. Fullarton.—*R. B.*
§ Orangefield.—*R. B.*

THE RANTIN DOG, THE DADDIE O'T.

Tune.—"Whare 'll our gudeman lie.'

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1790.)

O WHA my *babie-clouts* will buy? baby-cloths (*infants first dress*)
O wha will tent me when I cry?*
Wha will kiss me where I lie?
The *rantin* dog, the daddie *o't.* frolicking of it

O wha will own he did the *faut?* fault
O wha will buy the *groanin maut?* † child-birth malt
O wha will tell me how to *ca't?* name it
The rantin dog, the daddie o't.

When I mount the *creepie-chair,* penance-stool
Wha will sit beside me there?
Gie me Rob, I'll seek *nae mair,* give no more
The rantin dog, the daddie o't.

Wha will *crack* to me *my lane?* chat alone
Wha will mak me *fidgin fain?* eagerly fond
Wha will kiss me o'er again?
The rantin dog, the daddie o't.

[The poet attached the following note to this production in the copy of the "Museum" which belonged to his friend Mr. Riddell:—"I composed this song pretty early in life, and sent it to a young girl, a particular acquaintance of mine, who was at that time under a cloud."

Although previous annotators have held this to apply to Betty Paton, our conjecture is that the young girl here referred to was Jean Armour, and the period—early in 1786, when the state of matters between them could no longer be concealed.] (Lockhart condemns the above song, and says it "exhibits the poet as glorying, and only glorying in his shame." Sir Harris Nicolas, on the

* Who will attend to or nurse me when I am in child-bed?—J. H.
† Refreshments for the "howdie" (midwife) and "kimmers" or gossips.—J. H.

other hand, says that both this song and the "Poet's Welcome," referring to a prior occasion of the same kind, "are remarkable for the tenderness they breathe towards infant and mother alike." Waddell regards the song as "the most perfect specimen of the Scottish tongue ever written by Burns," and as detailing "the circumstances of such a painful situation with absolute pictorial fidelity."—J. H.)

HERE'S HIS HEALTH IN WATER.

Tune.—"The Job of Journey-work."

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1796.)

ALTHO' my back be at the wa',*
And tho' he be the *fautor;* sinner
Altho' my back be at the wa',
Yet, here's his health in water.
O *wae gae* by his wanton sides, woe worth
Sae *brawlie's* he could flatter finely
Till for his sake I'm slighted *sair,* sore
And *dree* the *kintra clatter:* endure country scandal
But tho' my back be at the wa',
Yet here's his health in water!

[Another verse of this song, although not in the poet's handwriting, was found among the numerous scraps which were forwarded to the late Mr. Pickering; but as its genuineness cannot be ascertained, we consign it to small type:—

He follow'd me baith out an' in—
The *deil haet* could I baffle'm! deuce a bit
He follow'd me baith out an' in,
Thro' a' the *neuks* o' Mauchlin: corners
And whan he *gat me in his grips,* laid hold of me
Sae *brawly* did he flatter, finely
That had a saint been in my stead,
She'd been as great a *fautor:* sinner
But let them say or let them do,
Here's Robin's health in water!

* Although just now I am under a cloud.—J. H.

Stenhouse, in his note to this song, states that Burns threw it off in jocular allusion to his own and Jean Armour's awkward predicament before their marriage. Allan Cunningham, however, denounces the suggestion as barbarous and insulting to both the lovers. For our part, we see no flagrant inaptitude in the conjecture of Stenhouse.]

ADDRESS TO THE *UNCO GUID*, uncommonly good

OR THE RIGIDLY RIGHTEOUS.

(EDINBURGH ED., 1787.)

My Son, these maxims make a rule,
An' lump them ay thegither;
The *Rigid Righteous* is a fool,
The *Rigid Wise* anither:
The cleanest corn that e'er was *dight* — fanned
May hae some *pyles* o' *caff* in; — particles, chaff
So ne'er a fellow-creature slight
For random fits o' *daffin*. — frolicking

SOLOMON—Eccles. ch. vii. verse 16.

O YE wha are *sae guid* yoursel, — so good
Sae pious and sae holy,
Ye've nought to do but mark and tell
Your neibours' *fauts* and folly! — faults
Whase life is like a *weel-gaun* mill, — well-going
Supplied wi' store o' water;
The heapèt happer's ebbing still,
An' still the clap plays clatter.

Hear me, ye venerable core,
As counsel for poor mortals
That frequent pass *douce* Wisdom's door — prudent
For *glaikit* Folly's portals: — giddy
I, for their thoughtless, careless sakes,
Would here *propone* defences— — state
Their *donsie* tricks, their black mistakes — morally unlucky
Their failings and mischances.

Ye see your state wi' theirs compared,
  And shudder at the *niffer;* exchange
But cast a moment's fair regard,
  What maks the mighty differ?
Discount what scant occasion gave,
  That purity ye pride in;
And (what's *aft mair* than *a' the lave*) oft more / all the rest
  Your better art o' hidin.

Think, when your castigated pulse
  Gies now and then a *wallop!* gives strong beat
What ragings must his veins convulse,
  That still eternal gallop!
Wi' wind and tide fair *i' your tail,* abaft
  Right on ye scud your sea-way;
But in the teeth o' *baith* to sail, both
  It makes an *unco* lee-way. very great

See Social Life and Glee sit down,
  All joyous and unthinking,
Till, quite *transmugrify'd,* they're grown metamorphosed
  Debauchery and Drinking:
O would they stay to calculate
  Th' eternal consequences;
Or your more dreaded hell to state,
  Damnation of expenses!

Ye high, exalted, virtuous dames,
  Tied up in godly laces,
Before ye *gie poor Frailty names,* miscall poor Frailty
  Suppose a change o' cases;
A dear-lov'd lad, convenience snug,
  A treach'rous inclination;
But, let me whisper i' your *lug,* ear
  Ye're *aiblins nae* temptation. perhaps no

* Then gently scan your brother man,
  Still gentler sister woman;
Tho' they may gang a *kennin* wrang, slight degree
  To step aside is human:
One point must still be greatly dark,
  The moving WHY they do it;
And just as lamely can ye mark,
  How far perhaps they rue it.

Who made the heart, 'tis He alone
  Decidedly can try us;
He knows each chord, its various tone,
  Each spring, its various bias:
Then at the balance let's be mute,
  We never can adjust it;
What's done we partly may compute,
  But know not what's resisted.

[This is pre-eminently one of those poems whose lines become "mottoes of the heart." In all likelihood, the period in Burns' life we have now reached, in the order of our chronology, was the date of its composition: yet it is rather remarkable that he withheld it from publication in his Kilmarnock edition of that year. There is a prose passage inserted in his Common-place Book, under date March, 1784, in which the line of reflection and argument is very similar to that in this poem. The passage being somewhat lengthy, we refer the reader to it in another portion of this work.]

("A more beautiful blending of humor with the purest charity and wisdom is, perhaps, not to be found in any similar composition in any language." Such is the verdict of P. Hately Waddell on this wonderful production, and the great heart of the world answers, Amen!—J. H.)

* A modern poetess, Miss Adelaide Proctor, has very elegantly elaborated the sentiment of these two verses, and in all probability she got the idea from Burns:

"Judge not; the working of his brain
  And of his heart thou canst not see;
What looks to thy dim eyes a stain,
  In God's pure light may only be
A scar, brought from some well-fought field,
  Where thou wouldst only faint and yield."

THE INVENTORY;

IN ANSWER TO A MANDATE BY THE SURVEYOR OF THE TAXES.

(CURRIE, 1800, COMPD. WITH STEWART, 1801.)

SIR, as your mandate did request,
I send you here a faithfu' list,
O' gudes an' *gear*, an' a' my *graith*, cash substance
To which I'm clear to *gi'e* my *aith*. give oath

Imprimis, then, for carriage cattle,
I *hae* four brutes o' gallant mettle, have
As ever drew before a *pettle*. plough-stick
My hand-afore's* a *guid auld* 'has been,' good old
An' *wight* an' *wilfu'* a' his days been; powerful willful
My hand-ahin's† a *weel gaun* fillie, well-going
That aft has borne me hame frae *Killie*, Kilmarnock
An' your auld borough mony a time,‡
In days when riding was nae crime.
[But *ance*, when in my wooing pride once
I, like a blockhead, *boost* to ride, behoved
The wilfu' creature sae I *pat to*, pushed
(L—d pardon a' my sins, an' that too!)
I play'd my fillie sic a *shavie*, trick
She's a' bedevil'd wi' the *spavie*.] spavin
My furr-ahin's§ a *wordy* beast, worthy
As e'er in *tug or tow* was traced. trace or rope
The fourth's a Highland Donald *hastie*, quick tempered
A d—n'd *red-wud* Kilburnie *blastie*!‖ stark-mad imp

---

* Fore horse on the left hand in the plough.
† Hindmost on the left hand in the plough.
‡ Ayr.
§ Hindmost on the right hand in the Plough
‖ He had bought it at Kilbirnie fair.

Foreby a *cowt* o' cowts the *wale*, colt choice
As ever ran before a tail:
Gin he be spar'd to be a beast,
He'll draw me fifteen *pund* at least. pounds sterling
Wheel-carriages I ha'e but few,
Three carts, an' twa are *feckly* new; nearly
An auld wheelbarrow, mair for token,
Ae leg an' *baith the trams* are broken; both handles
I made a poker o' the spin'le,
An' my auld mither *brunt* the *trin'le*. burned wheel

For men, I've three mischievous boys,
Run-deils for *ranting* an' for noise; mad caps frolic
A gaudsman* ane, a thrasher t' other:
Wee Davock *hauds* the *nowt* in *fother*. holds cattle fodder
I rule them as I ought, discreetly,
An' aften labor them completely;
An' ay on Sundays duly, nightly,
I on the "Questions"† *targe* them tightly; examine
Till, faith! wee *Davock's*‡ grown sae *gleg*, David sharp
Tho' scarcely *langer* than your leg, taller
He'll *screed* you *aff* Effectual Calling, repeat without hesitation
As fast as ony in the dwalling.
I've nane in female servan' station,
(L—d keep me *ay frae* a' temptation!) always from
I hae nae wife—and that my bliss is,
An' ye have laid nae tax on misses;
An' then, if kirk folks *dinna* clutch me, do not
I ken the deevils *darena* touch me. dare not
Wi' *weans* I'm mair than weel contented children
Heav'n sent me *ane mair* than I wanted: one more

---

* A driver of the plough team: the name is derived from the practice of using a gaud or goad to incite the animals, especially where oxen are employed.—J. H.

† On the Shorter Catechism of the Westminster Assembly of Divines. Every decent farmer catechized his servants on it each Sabbath evening. "*What is Effectual Calling*" is one of the questions.—J. H.

‡ The diminutive termination *ock* or *oc* is almost peculiar to Ayrshire; thus, there, a young girl is either *lassie* or *lassock*, elsewhere in Scotland it is only *lassie*.—J. H.

My *sonsie*, smirking, dear bought Bess,* plump
She stares the daddy in her face,†
Enough of ought ye like but grace:
But her, my bonie, sweet wee lady,
I've paid enough for her already;
An' gin ye tax her or her mither, and if
By the L—d, *ye'se* get them *a' thegither!* you will altogether

And now, remember, Mr. Aiken,
Nae kind of licence out I'm takin:
[*Frae* this time forth, I do declare from
I'se ne'er ride horse nor *hizzie* mair;] I will hussy
Thro' dirt and dub for life I'll *paidle*, wade
Ere I sae dear pay for a saddle,
My travel a', on foot I'll *shank it*, foot it
I've sturdy *bearers*, Gude be thankit! legs
[The kirk and you may tak' you that,
It puts but little in your *pat*;‡ pot
Sae *dinna* put me in your *beuk* do not tax-book
Nor for my ten white shillings *leuk*.] look

This list, wi' my ain hand I wrote it,
The day and date as under noted;
Then know all ye whom it concerns,
Subscripsi huic, ROBERT BURNS.

MOSSGIEL, February 22, 1786.

[In May, 1785, with a view to liquidate ten millions of unfunded debt, Mr. Pitt made a large addition to the number of taxed articles, and amongst these were female-servants. It became the duty of Mr. Aiken, as tax-surveyor for the district, to serve the usual notice on Burns, who, on receipt of it, made his return in the verses which form our text. Several passages, here marked with brackets, were omitted by Currie; these are supplied from Stewart.]

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* The poet's child, then an inmate of Mossgiel, and about fifteen months old. See note, page 69.—J. H.

† Resembles her father in every feature; is the very image of her father.—J. H.

‡ The Church and you (as tax-gatherer) may both take this threat (or vow) to yourselves; it promises to put but little in either of your pots.—J. H.

(Mr. Aiken was one of the earliest to recognize Burns' genius, and to lead others to recognize it, even before the publication of the Kilmarnock edition. See note to "VISION," p. 243.—J. H.)

TO JOHN KENNEDY, DUMFRIES HOUSE.

(CUNNINGHAM'S ED., 1834.)

Now, Kennedy, if foot or horse
E'er bring you in by Mauchlin *corse*, market-cross
(Lord, man, there's lasses there *wad* force would
A hermit's fancy;
An' down the *gate* in faith they're worse, way
An' *mair unchancy*.) more dangerous

But as I'm sayin, please step to Dow's,
An' taste *sic gear* as Johnie brews, such stuff
Till some *bit callan* bring me news boy or other
That ye are there;
An' if we *dinna hae a bouze*, do not have a carousal
I'se ne'er drink *mair*. I will more

It's no I like to sit an' swallow,
Then like a swine to puke an' wallow;
But *gie* me just a true good fallow, give
Wi' right *ingine*, genius (*Latin ingenium*)
And *spunkie ance* to make us mellow game for once
An' then we'll shine.

Now if ye're ane *o' warl's* folk of the world's
Wha rate the wearer by the cloak, who
An' *sklent* on poverty their joke, squint
Wi' bitter sneer,
Wi' you *nae* friendship I will *troke*, no trade
Nor cheap nor dear,

But if, as I'm informèd weel,
Ye hate as ill's the vera deil
The flinty heart that *canna* feel— cannot
Come, sir, here's to you!
Hae, there's my *haun*, I *wiss* you weel, hand wish
An' *gude be wi' you.* God be with you

ROBT. BURNESS.

MOSSGIEL, *3rd March, 1786.*

[The above lines, collated with the original MS., obligingly communicated by its present possessor, John Adam, Esq., Greenock, form the concluding portion of a letter addressed to Kennedy, in reply to a request from him to be favored with a perusal of the "Cotter's Saturday Night." The poet immediately complied by sending his only copy of that poem; merely requesting his correspondent to make a copy, and return either the original or the transcript. It appears now to be certain that Kennedy adopted the latter course, and retained the holograph, which, along with several letters addressed by Burns to Kennedy, was purchased, about forty years ago, by Mr. Cochrane, the London publisher, and by him presented to Allan Cunningham.

Kennedy, in 1786, was factor to Patrick, the last Earl of Dumfries, resident at Dumfries House, about half-way between Ochiltree and Auchinleck, now the property of the Earl of Bute. In the old Calton burial-ground at Edinburgh, is yet to be seen the grave-stone of Burns' early friend, bearing the following inscription:—"In memory of John Kennedy, who died at Edinburgh 19th June, 1812, aged 55. He was 13 years Factor to the Earl of Dumfries, and 18 to the Earl of Breadalbine." He would thus be born about two years before our bard.]

TO MR. M'ADAM, OF CRAIGEN-GILLAN,

IN ANSWER TO AN OBLIGING LETTER HE SENT IN THE COMMENCEMENT OF MY POETIC CAREER.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

SIR, o'er a *gill* I *gat* your card, of whisky got
I *trow* it made me proud;* assure you

* Burns' frequent affectation of dissipation might lead to the supposition that he was already a victim to the vice. That this was not the case we have abun-

'See wha taks notice o' the bard!'
  I *lap* and cry'd fu' loud. leapt

Now *deil-ma-care* about their *jaw*, d—l may care / coarse talk
  The senseless, *gawky* million; silly
I'll cock my nose *aboon* them a', above
  I'm *roos'd* by Craigen-Gillan! * praised

'Twas noble, sir; 'twas like yoursel,
  To grant your high protection:
A great man's smile ye *ken* fu' well, know
  Is ay a blest infection.

Tho', by his† *banes* wha in a tub bones
  Match'd *Macedonian Sandy!* Alexander the great
On my *ain* legs thro' dirt and dub, own
  I independent stand ay,—

And when those legs to gude, warm *kail* barley-broth
  Wi' welcome canna bear me,
A lee dyke-side,‡ a *sybow-tail*, leek
  An' barley-scone § shall cheer me.

Heaven spare you lang to kiss the breath
  O' mony flow'ry simmers!
An' bless your bonie lasses *baith*, both
  I'm tauld they're *loosome kimmers!* loveable girls

An' God bless young Dunaskin's laird,
  The blossom of our gentry!
An' may he wear an auld man's beard,
  A credit to his country.

---

dant evidence, in addition to his brother's direct testimony. For one thing, he had at this time no money to spend on drink.—J. H.

*It is the custom in Scotland to name "lairds" after their estates and farmers after their farms.—J. H.

† Diogenes.

‡ The lee side of a dyke. A dyke is a wall of sods or dry stones.

§ A soft cake of barley-meal.

TO A LOUSE—

"O wad some Power the gifte gie us
To see ourselsl as ithers see us!"

TO A LOUSE—

"O wad some Power the giftie gie us
To see oursels as ithers see us!"

[About March, 1786, we suppose to have been the date of the above verses. The poet thought so well of this little production that he included it in the Glenriddell collection of his early poems, where he states that it was an extempore composition, "wrote in Nanse Tinnock's, Mauchline." Craigengillan is a considerable estate in Carrick. Mr. David Woodburn, factor for its owner, was on such friendly terms with Burns, that he received from him a copy of the celebrated cantata, "The Jolly Beggars"—the same which afterwards passed into the hands of Thomas Stewart, the publisher. (An additional portion was given to Stewart by his uncle, Mr. John Richmond, of Mauchline. See note to "Jolly Beggars."—J. H.]

TO A LOUSE.

ON SEEING ONE ON A LADY'S BONNET AT CHURCH.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

HA! *whaur ye gaun*, ye crawlin *ferlie!*	where are ye going / wonder
Your impudence protects you *sairlie;*	wonderfully
I *canna* say but ye *strunt* rarely,	cannot strut
Owre gauze and lace;	over
Tho' faith! I fear, ye dine but sparely	
On *sic* a place.	such
Ye ugly, creepin, *blastet wonner*,	blasted imp
Detested, shunn'd by *saunt* an' sinner,	saint
How *daur* ye set your *fit* upon her—	dare foot
Sae fine a lady?	so
Gae somewhere else, and seek your dinner	go
On some poor body.	
Swith! in some beggar's hauffet squattle,*	
Wi' ither kindred, jumping cattle;	with other

* Off with you! and nestle in some beggar's side-locks.

There ye may creep, an sprawl, and *sprattle* scramble
In shoals and nations;
Whaur horn nor bane * ne'er *daur* unsettle where / dare
Your thick *plantations.* colonies

Now *haud you there*, ye're out o' sight, stay where you are
Below the *fatt'rels* snug an tight; puckers
Na, faith ye yet! ye'll no be right, no, hang you!
Till ye've got on it—
The vera tapmost, tow'rin height
O' Miss's bonnet.

My sooth! right *bauld* ye set your nose out, bold
As plump an' grey as ony *groset:* gooseberry
O for some rank, mercurial *rozet*, ointment
Or *fell*, red *smeddum*, deadly / powder
I'd *gie* you *sic* a hearty dose o't, give such
Wad dress your *droddum!* breech

I wad nae been surpris'd to spy
You on an auld wife's *flannen toy;* flannel cap
Or *aiblins* some bit *duddie* boy, perhaps ragged
On's *wyliecoat;* under-jacket
But Miss's fine *Lunardi!* † fye! balloon-shaped bonnet
How *daur* ye do't? dare

O Jeany, *dinna* toss your head, do not
An' set your beauties a' *abreid!* abroad
Ye little *ken* what cursed speed know
The *blastie's* makin: little imp
Thae winks an' finger-ends, I dread, these
Are notice takin

---

* Small-toothed comb of bone or horn.

† Vincent Lunardi, on September 15, 1784, ascended from London in an air-balloon—the earliest attempt in Britain; and on 5th October, 1785, he performed a like feat from Heriot's Green, at Edinburgh. Being a novelty and, therefore, in the fashion, a particular kind of lady's hat was named after him.—J. H.

O *wad* some Power the *giftie gie* us, would gift give
To see *oursels* as *ithers* see us! ourselves others
It *wad frae* mony a blunder free us, would from
An' foolish notion:
What airs in dress an' gait wad *lea'e* us, leave
An' ev'n devotion!

[The author was fond of selecting the lower animals as subjects for his muse. We have already seen how much he made of the pet-ewe, the disabled mare, the two dogs, the field-mouse; and now he extracts a moral that can never die from the most contemptible little animal in nature. Some even of the admirers of Burns have expressed a wish that this poem had never been written; but the last stanza soon became a world-wide proverbial quotation; and if poetical merit is to be estimated by such instant and universal recognition, this piece ranks high among his happiest productions.—J. H.]

INSCRIBED ON A WORK OF HANNAH MORE'S,

PRESENTED TO THE AUTHOR BY A LADY.

(CUNNINGHAM'S ED., 1834.)

THOU flatt'ring mark of friendship kind,
Still may thy pages call to mind
The dear, the beauteous, donor;
Tho' sweetly female ev'ry part,
Yet such a head, and more—the heart
Does both the sexes honor:
She show'd her taste refin'd and just,
When she selected thee;
Yet deviating, own I must,
For sae approving me:
But kind still I'll mind still
The *giver* in the gift;
I'll bless her, an' wiss her
A Friend *aboon* the *lift*. above sky

[The poet enclosed a copy of this inscription in a letter to Mr. Robert Aiken, dated 3d April, 1786. His plan of publishing a volume of his poems at Kilmarnock was then completed, for he says to his friend and patron,—"My proposals for publishing I am just going to send to the press." It is very remarkable that no biographer or editor of Burns has ever stated or suggested the name of the lady, "Mrs. C.," who showed that mark of early attention to Burns, although he refers to it as "the second flattering instance of Mrs. C.'s notice and approbation."

Upon no authority beyond reasonable surmise, we venture to say that the lady was Mrs. Cunninghame, of Enterkin, a daughter of Mrs. Stewart, of Stair, and a distant relative of Mr. Aiken.

On 20th March, the poet had written to Robert Muir, of Kilmarnock, hoping to have the pleasure of seeing him there, "before we hear the gowk"—*i. e.*, before the cuckoo (the "harbinger of spring") is heard. That was, of course, to arrange about the printing of his poems; and it is very likely that when he went to Kilmarnock he had his poem of the "Ordination," and perhaps a sketch of the "Holy Fair" also, in his pocket, both of those pieces being closely associated with the clerical history of that town.]

THE HOLY FAIR.*

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

A robe of seeming truth and trust
  Hid crafty observation;
And secret hung, with poison'd crust,
  The dirk of defamation:
A mask that like the gorget show'd,
  Dye-varying on the pigeon;
And for a mantle large and broad,
  He wrapt him in *Religion*.

HYPOCRISY A-LA-MODE.

UPON a simmer Sunday morn,
  When Nature's face is fair,
I walkèd forth to view the corn,
  An' snuff the *caller* air. fresh cool

* "Holy Fair" is a common phrase in the west of Scotland for a sacramental occasion.—*R. B.* In Scotland the word "sacrament" is popularly limited to the communion or eucharist.—J. H.

The rising sun owre Galston * muirs
  Wi' glorious light was *glintin;* — glancing
The hares were *hirplin* down the *furrs,* — creeping limpingly / furrows
  The *lav'rocks* they were chantin — larks
    Fu' sweet that day. — full

As lightsomely I *glowr'd* abroad — stared
  To see a scene sae gay,
Three *hizzies,* early at the road, — wenches
  Cam *skelpin* up the way. — walking rapidly
Twa had *manteeles o'* dolefu' black, — mantles of
  But *ane wi' lyart* lining; — one with gray
The third, that *gaed a wee* a-back, — walked a little
  Was in the fashion shining,
    Fu' gay that day.

The twa appear'd like sisters twin,
  In feature, form, an' *claes;* — clothes
Their visage wither'd, lang an' thin,
  An' sour as ony *slaes:* — sloes
The third cam up, *hap-stap-an'-lowp,* — hop-step and jump
  As light as *ony lambie,* — any lambkin
An' wi' a *curchie* low did stoop, — curtsey
  As soon as e'er she saw me,
    Fu' kind that day.

Wi' bonnet aff, quoth I, "Sweet lass, — with head uncovered
  I think ye seem to *ken* me, — know
I'm sure I've seen that bonie face,
  But yet I *canna* name ye." — cannot
Quo' she, an' laughin as she spak,
  An' taks me by the hands,
"Ye, for my sake, hae *gien* the *feck* — given most
  Of a' the ten *commands* — commandments
    A *screed* some day." — rent

---

* An upland parish to the east of Kilmarnock.—J. H.

"My name is Fun—your *cronie* dear, comrade
The nearest friend ye hae;
An' this is Superstition here,
An' that's Hypocrisy.
I'm *gaun* to Mauchline 'holy fair,' going
To spend an hour in *daffin:* frolicking
Gin ye'll go there, yon *runkl'd* pair, if wrinkled
We will get famous laughin
At them this day."

Quoth I, "Wi' a' my heart, I'll do't;
I'll get my Sunday's *sark* on, shirt
An' meet you on the holy spot;
Faith, we'se hae fine remarkin!"
Then I *gaed* hame at *crowdie*-time,* went breakfast
An' soon I made me ready;
For roads were clad, frae side to side,
Wi' mony a *wearie* body, toiling
In droves that day.

Here farmers *gash*, in ridin *graith*, wise and solemn attire
Gaed hoddin by their *cotters;* went jogging past cottagers
There swankies young, in braw braid-claith,†
Are springing *owre* the gutters. over
The lasses, skelpin barefit, thrang, ‡
In silks an' scarlets glitter;
Wi' sweet-milk cheese, in *mony* a *whang* many great slice
An' *farls*, bak'd wi' butter, oatmeal cakes
Fu' *crump* that day. crisp

When by the 'plate' we set our nose,
Weel heapèd up wi' ha'pence,

---

* The regular Scotch breakfast of the working classes was oat-meal porridge and milk. Crowdie means any food of the porridge kind.—J. H.

† There young strapping fellows in fine broadcloth.—J. H.

‡ The girls hurrying along barefooted in throngs.—J. H.

A greedy *glowr* 'black-bonnet' * throws, stare
An' we *maun* draw our *tippence*. must twopence
Then in we go to see the show:
On ev'ry side they're gath'rin;
Some carryin *dails*, some chairs an' stools, planks
An' some are busy *bleth'rin* talking loosely
Right loud that day.

Here stands a shed to *fend* the show'rs, ward off
An' screen our countra gentry; †
There 'Racer Jess,' ‡ an' twa-three wh-res,
Are blinkin at the entry.
Here sits a raw o' *tittlin jads*, tittering jades
Wi' heavin breasts an' bare neck;
An' there a *batch* o' *wabster* lads, group weaver
Blackguardin frae Kilmarnock,
For fun this day. §

Here some are thinkin on their sins,
An' some upo' their *claes*; clothes
Ane curses feet that *fyl'd* his *shins*, bedaubed ankles
Anither sighs an' prays:
On this hand sits a chosen *swatch*, sample
Wi' screw'd-up, grace-proud faces;
On that a set o' *chaps*, at watch, young fellows
Thrang winkin on the lasses busy
To chairs that day.

---

* A cant name for the elder who stood at "the plate" on which the offerings were deposited at the entrance to the place of meeting.—J. H.

† The communion used to be celebrated out of doors in the church-yard or a field near the church, and a temporary shed was put up to give shelter from the weather to the aristocracy who attended. The whole thing was not unlike an American camp-meeting, excepting that in Scotland the communion was celebrated, and the out-of-doors services lasted only one day.—J. H.

‡ February, 1813, died at Mauchline, Janet Gibson—the "Racer Jess" of Burns' "Holy Fair," remarkable for her pedestrian feats. She was a daughter of "Poosie Nansie" who figures in "The Jolly Beggars."—*Newspaper Obituary.*

§ Kilmarnock "wabsters," like their brethren of the loom elsewhere, had a peculiar taste for theological polemics. Political polemics was then denied them, so they gave themselves vent on religion. See opening of "Ordination." Kilmarnock people always disliked this allusion.—J. H.

O happy is that man, an' blest!
  Nae wonder that it pride him!
Whase ain dear lass, that he likes best, whose own
  Comes *clinkin* down beside him! claps herself
Wi' arm repos'd on the chair back,
  He sweetly does compose him;
Which, by degrees, slips round her neck,
  An's loof upon her bosom, and his palm
    Unkend that day.* as if unconscious

Now a' the congregation o'er
  Is silent expectation;
For Moodie *speels* the holy door,† climbs
  Wi' tidings o' damnation: ‡
Should *Hornie*, as in ancient days, Satan
  '*Mang* sons o' God present him, among
The vera sight o' Moodie's face,
  To 's *ain het hame* had sent him own hot home
    Wi' fright that day. with

Hear how he clears the points o' Faith
  Wi' rattlin and thumpin!
Now meekly calm, now wild in wrath,
  He's stampin, an' he's jumpin!
His lengthen'd chin, his turned-up snout,
  His *eldritch* squeel an' gestures, unearthly
O how they fire the heart devout,
  Like cantharidian plaisters
    On sic a day!

But hark! the tent has chang'd its voice;
  There's peace an' rest *nae* langer; no

---

* "This verse sets boldly out with a line of a psalm. It is the best description ever was drawn. 'Unkend that day' surpasses all."—*James Hogg.*

† Rev. Alexander Moodie of Riccarton, one of the heroes of the "Twa Herds." His personal appearance and style of oratory are not here caricatured by the poet. Trans. from Culross, 1762. Died February 15, 1799. The "holy door" is the door giving entrance to the tent whence the ministers preached.—J. H.

‡ Altered from 'salvation," by suggestion of Dr. Hugh Blair.

For a' the real judges rise,
  They *canna* sit for anger, cannot
Smith * opens out his cauld harangues,
  On practice and on morals;
An' aff the godly pour in *thrangs*, and off throngs
  To *gie* the jars an' barrels give
    A lift that day.

What signifies his barren shine,
  Of moral pow'rs an' reason?
His English style, an' gesture fine
  Are *a'* clean out *o'* season. all of
Like Socrates or Antonine,
  Or some auld pagan heathen,
The moral man he does define,
  But ne'er a word o' faith in
    That's right that day.

In *guid* time comes an antidote good
  Against *sic* poison'd nostrum; such
For Peebles,† frae the water-fit,
  Ascends the holy rostrum:
See, up he's got the word o' God,
  An' meek an' *mim* has view'd it, affectedly demure

---

* Rev. George (subsequently Dr.) Smith of Galston, referred to in the "Twa Herds" and also in a different feeling, under the appellation of "Irvine Side" in the "Kirk's Alarm." Ord. 1778. Died 1823. Burns here meant to compliment him on his rational mode of preaching and refined style, but his friends regarded the stanzas as calculated to injure him, His son, also Rev. Dr. George Smith, succeeded Dr. Guthrie in 1843 in the Old Greyfriars Church, Edinburgh. He married a daughter of George Hogarth, the musical composer and art-critic, and grand-daughter of George Thomson, Burns' correspondent, and publisher of so many of his finest songs. Mrs. Dickens was another grand-daughter of Thomson, and sister to Mrs. Smith.—J. H.

† Rev. Wm. Peebles of "The Water-Fit," or Newton-upon-Ayr (where the river Ayr flows into the sea). Ord. 1778, made a D.D. in 1795, and died in 1825, aged 74.

While 'Common-sense'* has *taen* the road, taken
An' aff an' up the Cowgate †
Fast, fast that day.

Wee Miller ‡ *niest*, the Guard relieves, next
An' Orthodoxy *raibles*, pours out confusedly
Tho' in his heart he *weel* believes, well
An' thinks it auld wives' fables:
But faith! the *birkie* wants a manse, smart fellow
So, *cannilie* he *hums* them; knowingly humbugs
Altho' his carnal wit an' sense
Like *hafflins-wise* o'ercomes him half
At times that day.

Now *butt* an' *ben* § the change-house fills,
Wi' *yill-caup* commentators; ale-mug
Here's cryin out for *bakes* an' *gills*, biscuits whisky
An' there the *pint-stowp* clatters; pint-measure
While thick an' *thrang*, an' loud an' lang, busily
Wi' logic an' wi' scripture,
They raise a *din*, that in the end noise
Is like to breed a rupture
O' wrath that day.

Leeze me on drink! it *gies* us *mair* commend me to / gives more
Than either school or college;
It *ken'les* wit, it *waukens lear*, kindles awakens learning
It *pangs* us *fou* o' knowledge: crams full

---

* We learn from Chambers, who states it on local authority, that Mr. Mackenzie, surgeon of Mauchline, and friend of Burns, had recently written on some topic under the pseudonym of *Common-sense*. He was engaged this day to dine at Dumfries House with the Earl of Dumfries, so, after listening to some of the harangues, he left the meeting and set off along the Cowgate to keep his appointment.—J. H.

† A street so called which faces the tent in Mauchline.—*R. B.*

‡ Rev. Alex. Miller, afterwards of Kilmaurs, a short, paunchy man, supposed to be at heart a "moderate." "This stanza," says Chambers, "virtually the most depreciatory in the poem, is said to have retarded Miller's advancement." Ord. in Kilmaurs, 1788. Died in 1804.

§ Kitchen and spence. See note to "The Vision," p. 234.

Be't whisky-gill or penny-wheep,*
  Or *ony* stronger potion, any
It never fails, on drinkin deep,
  To *kittle* up our notion. tickle
  By night or day.

The lads an' lasses, *blythely* bent cheerily
  To mind *baith saul* an' body, both soul
Sit round the table, weel content,
  An' *steer* about the *toddy:* stir hot Scotch
On this *ane's* dress, an' that ane's *leuk*, one's look
  They're makin observations;
While some are *cozie* i' the *neuk*, snug corner
  An' forming assignations
  To meet some day.

But now the L—'s *ain* trumpet *touts*, own sounds
  Till a' the hills are *rairin*, roaring with echoes
And echoes back-return the shouts;
  Black Russell is *na* spairin:† not
His piercin words, like highlan' swords,
  Divide the joints an' marrow;
His talk o' Hell, whare devils dwell,
  Our vera "*sauls* does harrow"‡ souls
  Wi' fright that day!

A vast, unbottom'd, boundless pit,
  Fill'd *fou* o' *lowin* brunstane, full blazing
Whase ragin flame, an' scorchin heat,
  Wad melt the hardest *whun-stane!* whinstone
The half-asleep start up wi' fear,
  An' think they hear it roarin;

---

* Very small ale (sometimes made from molasses) that costs two cents, or a penny a quart bottle.—J. H.

† Rev. John Russell, one of the "Twa Herds," and "Rumble John" of the *Kirk's Alarm*. Ordained in Kilmarnock 1774. Called to Stirling 1800.

‡ Shakespeare's "Hamlet."—*R. B.*

When presently it does appear,
'Twas but some neibor snorin
Asleep that day.

'Twad be *owre* lang a tale to tell, too
How mony stories past;
An' how they crouded to the *yill*, ale
When they were a' dismist;
How drink *gaed* round, in *cogs an' caups*,* went
Amang the *furms* an' benches; forms
An' cheese an' bread, frae women's laps,
Was dealt about in *lunches*, liberal pieces
An' *dawds* that day. large slices

In comes a *gawsie*, *gash guidwife*, portly, sagacious matron
An' sits down by the fire,
Syne draws her *kebbuck* an' her knife; then cheese
The lasses they are shyer:
The auld *guidmen*, about the grace, heads of families
Frae side to side they bother;† from
Till some ane *by* his *bonnet* lays, aside Scotch cap
An' *gies* them't, like a *tether*, gives halter
Fu' lang that day. full long

Waesucks! for him that gets nae lass, Alas
Or lasses that hae naething!
Sma' need has he to say a grace,
Or *melvie* his braw claithing! soil with crumbs
O wives, be mindfu' ance yoursel
How bonie lads ye wanted;
An' dinna for a *kebbuck-heel* end of a cheese
Let lasses be affronted
On *sic* a day! such

* Vessels, generally of wood, from which ale was drunk. They were very much, like the small wooden toy pails for children of the present day.—J. H.

† It is the custom in Scotland to ask a blessing before eating in any way, and to return thanks after. It is a mark of respect to ask a person to say grace; generally, he modestly declines and suggests another, who in turn names a third and so on. Thus they "bother about frae side to side," till one gives them it, in length "like a tether."—J. H.

Now '*Clinkumbell*,' wi' rattlin *tow*, bell-ringer rope
  Begins to *jow* an' *croon;* toll sound
Some swagger hame the best they *dow*, are able
  Some wait the afternoon.
At slaps the billies halt a blink,*
  Till lasses strip their *shoon:* shoes
Wi' faith an' hope, an' love an' drink,
  They're a' in famous tune
    For *crack* that day. talk

How mony hearts this day converts
  O' sinners and o' lasses!
Their hearts o' stane, *gin night*, are gane by the time night comes
  As saft as ony flesh is:
There's some are *fou* o' love divine; full
  There's some are fou o' brandy;
An' mony jobs that day begin,
  May end in 'houghmagandie' breaking the seventh commandment
    Some *ither* day. other

[Mr. Lockhart, after commending the "Cottar's Saturday Night," in eloquent terms, makes this observation,—"That the same man should have produced that poem and the 'Holy Fair' about the same time, will ever continue to move wonder and regret." But the world's "regret" in this matter has been very evanescent; for, although the abuses and absurdities here censured, in connection with rural celebrations of the communion, have happily disappeared, it cannot be said that the lessons conveyed in the satire are no longer necessary.

Mr. Lockhart has farther observed that had Burns "taken up the subject of this rural communion in a solemn mood, he might have produced a piece as gravely beautiful as his 'Holy Fair' is quaint, graphic, and picturesque. Nay," adds the critic, "I can easily imagine a scene of family worship to have come from his hand as pregnant with the ludicrous as the 'Holy Fair' itself." In these circumstances, we cannot be too thankful that Burns followed his own instincts in the mode of treating both subjects.]

(In another strain Lockhart elsewhere says:—That the "Holy

* At gaps in the fences which offer convenience for sitting down, the young fellows halt a moment till the lasses strip off their shoes. Scotch girls in Burns' days walked more easily barefooted than with shoes; besides, there was the question of economy.—J. H.

Fair" was the last and best of that series of satires wherein the same set of persons were lashed. "Here," says that critic, "unlike the others that have been mentioned, satire keeps its own place, and is subservient to the poetry of Burns. This is indeed an extraordinary performance; no partizan of any sect can whisper that malice has formed its principal inspiration, or that its chief attraction lies in the boldness with which individuals, entitled and accustomed to respect, are held up to ridicule. Immediately on its publication, it was acknowledged (amidst the sternest mutterings of wrath) that national manners were once more in the hands of a NATIONAL POET."

Dr. Norman Macleod, the highly-gifted and genial minister of the Barony parish, Glasgow, and editor of *Good Words*, seems to cast doubt on the "Holy Fair" as a picture of life and manners, even in Burns' day. He says:—"It has been the fashion indeed of some people who know nothing about Scotland or her Church to use Burns as an authority for calling such meetings 'Holy Fairs.' What they may have been in the days of the Poet, or how much he may himself have contributed to profane them I know not. But neither in Ayrshire nor anywhere else, have I ever been doomed to behold so irreverent and wicked a spectacle as he portrays." Dr. Macleod was the son of a Highland manse, and came to Ayrshire when the breath of the coming Disruption was beginning to be felt. The "Holy Fair" is a strong, but scarcely an exaggerated, picture of many a sacrament in the southwest of Scotland at which the writer has been present in his youth. The drinking commonly took place in the houses of poor people near the scene, to whom the little profit was an object. Of course they had no license. When farm servants were hired in upper Nithsdale it was common to stipulate for a holiday either on Thornhill race fair or the Brig o' Scaur sacrament; and the Brig o' Scaur congregation were Cameronians! Chambers tells us that in Burns' time this poem was much relished by the moderate clergy, Dr. Blair declaring it to be the most masterly satire of its kind in existence.—J. H.)

The communion was administered at Mauchline in those days but once a year, namely, on the second Sunday of August; and Chambers, considering that any portion of the year 1785 was too early a date for this composition, sets it down as being nearly the last piece produced by Burns prior to the publication of his poems in July 1786. The "Ordination" was certainly a production of February of that year, and we feel bound to regard "The Holy Fair" as a riper performance, composed somewhat farther on in the season.

In the opening of the "Holy Fair," Fergusson's "Leith Races" is evidently closely followed as a model; an imaginary being

called "Mirth" conducts the Edinburgh poet to the scene of enjoyment, exactly as "Fun" in this poem conveys Burns to "Mauchline Holy Fair."]

SONG, COMPOSED IN SPRING.

Tune—"Johnny's Grey Breeks."

(EDINBURGH ED., 1787.)

AGAIN rejoicing Nature sees
  Her robe assume its vernal hues:
Her leafy locks wave in the breeze,
  All freshly steep'd in morning dews.

Chorus.—And *maun* I still on Menie doat, must
  And bear the scorn that's in her *e'e?* eye
For it's jet, jet-black, an' it's like a hawk,
  An' it *winna* let a *body be.** will not person alone

In vain to me the cowslips *blaw*, blow
  In vain to me the vi'lets spring;
In vain to me in glen or shaw,
  The *mavis* and the *lintwhite* sing. thrush linnet
  And maun I still, &c.

The merry ploughboy cheers his team,
  Wi' joy the *tentie* seedsman stalks; careful
But life to me's a weary dream,
  A dream of ane that never *wauks.* awakens
  And maun I still, &c.

The wanton coot the water skims,
  Amang the reeds the ducklings cry,
The stately swan majestic swims,
  And ev'ry thing is blest but I.
  And maun I still, &c.

---

* This chorus is part of a song composed by a gentleman in Edinburgh, a particular friend of the author's. Menie is the common abbreviation of Mariamne. —*R. B.* More correctly, it is the abbreviate of Marion.

The sheep-herd *steeks* his *faulding slap*, shuts fold-gap
  And o'er the moorlands whistles *shill;* shrill
Wi' wild, unequal, wand'ring step,
  I meet him on the dewy hill.
    And maun I still, &c.

And when the lark, 'tween light and dark,
  Blythe *waukens* by the daisy's side, awakens
And mounts and sings on flittering wings,
  A woe-worn *ghaist* I hameward glide. ghost
    And maun I still, &c.

Come winter, with thine angry howl,
  And raging, bend the naked tree;
Thy gloom will soothe my cheerless soul,
  When nature all is sad like me!
    And maun I still, &c.

[The author must have had a very special reason for the retention, through all his own editions, of this chorus, apparently so inappropriate to the sentiment of the song. His main purpose was to shew that slighted love was the cause of his mourning; and he told the truth in his foot-note about the chorus being "part of a song composed by a gentleman in Edinburgh, a particular friend of the author's." This "gentleman in Edinburgh" was none other than the bard himself, who of course was his own "particular friend;" and the substitution of the name "Menie" for *Jeanie* was a necessary part of the little *ruse* he chose here to adopt. In like manner, he poured forth about the same time his "Lament occasioned by the unfortunate issue of *a friend's* amour."

The pride of Burns seems to have been galled to the extreme by the position assumed by Jean and her parents, at the time when the poet's acknowledgment of a private marriage with Jean was formally torn up in scorn.

The chorus of this song, however jarring it may seem to the mere reader of the text, has no such effect when sung in slowish time along with the body of the song, to the tune actually chaunted by the poet when in the act of composing it. Gray's "Elegy" was present in his thoughts, while engaged with this composition, as well as that which immediately follows; and indeed the poet acknowledges this in his note to Kennedy which enclosed the "Mountain Daisy." The similarity between verse sixth of this song and verse second of the "Daisy," needs no pointing out.]

TO A MOUNTAIN DAISY.

ON TURNING ONE DOWN WITH THE PLOUGH, IN APRIL 1786.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

WEE, modest, crimson-tippèd flow'r,
Thou's met me in an evil hour;
For I *maun* crush amang the *stoure* — must dust
Thy slender stem:
To spare thee now is past my pow'r,
Thou bonie gem.

Alas! it's no thy neibor sweet,
The bonie lark, companion meet,
Bending thee '*mang* the dewy *weet*, — among wet
Wi' *spreckl'd* breast! — speckled
When upward-springing, *blythe*, to greet — glad
The purpling east.

Cauld blew the bitter-biting north — cold
Upon thy early, humble birth;
Yet cheerfully thou *glinted* forth — glanced
Amid the storm,
Scarce rear'd above the parent-earth
Thy tender form.

The flaunting flow'rs our gardens yield,
High shelt'ring woods and *wa's maun* shield; — walls / must
But thou, beneath the random *bield* — shelter
O' clod or stane, — of
Adorns the *histie stibble* field, — parched stubble
Unseen, alane.

There, in thy scanty mantle clad,
Thy *snawie* bosom sun-ward spread, — snowy

Thou lifts thy unassuming head
In humble guise;
But now the share uptears thy bed,
And low thou lies!

Such is the fate of artless maid,
Sweet flow'ret of the rural shade!
By love's simplicity betray'd,
And guileless trust;
Till she, like thee, all soil'd, is laid
Low *i'* the dust.

Such is the fate of simple bard,
On life's rough ocean luckless starr'd!
Unskilful he to note the card
Of prudent lore,
Till billows rage, and gales blow hard,
And whelm him o'er!

Such fate to suffering worth is giv'n,
Who long with wants and woes has striv'n,
By human pride or cunning driv'n
To mis'ry's brink;
Till wrench'd of ev'ry stay but Heav'n,
He, ruin'd, sink!

Ev'n thou who mourn'st the Daisy's fate,
That fate is thine—no distant date;
Stern Ruin's plough-share drives elate,
Full on thy bloom,
Till crush'd beneath the furrow's weight,
Shall be thy doom!*

---

*An intelligent observer of his own courses of action and the causes leading up to them will often trace these to the pervading tone or color of his mind at the time. Burns when plowing the grass-rigs of Mossgiel on this April morning, was carrying in his bosom the reflection that Jean Armour had renounced him, and that her father was taking steps to unchain on him the sleuthhounds of the law. His whole mental horizon was tinged with gloom, and his exquisitely sympathetic nature led him to see a type of his own fate in the destruction of "the meanest flower that blows." He had plowed down a thousand daisies before this, but not one of them all ever roused reflection like this, or tuned his lyre to sing so sweet and sadly sympathetic song.

[On 20th April 1786, our poet enclosed this "little gem" to his friend John Kennedy. In that MS. it is called "The Gowan," a title subsequently changed for the English appellation, as above.

Regarding this poem, Burns says, "I am a good deal pleased with some of the sentiments, as they are just the native querulous feelings of a heart which (as the elegantly melting Gray says) 'melancholy has marked for her own.'" It is curious to note that the closing couplet of each of the four concluding verses begins with the same word—"Till."

Grahame, the author of "The Sabbath, and other poems," has the following fine apostrophe to the lark, in connection with the text of this and the preceding poem:—

> "Thou, simple bird
> Of all the vocal quire, dwell'st in a home
> The humblest, yet thy morning song ascends
> Nearest to heaven;—sweet emblem of *his* song
> Who sung thee wakening by the daisy's side!"

We have referred to Gray the poet as having furnished some impulse to Burns in these pieces; and we are indebted to Dr. Carruthers for pointing out that the image in the closing verse of the text is derived from Dr. Young:—

> "Stars rush, and final Ruin fiercely drives
> His plough-share o'er creation."—*Night* ix.]

(This exquisite piece, like those to "The Mouse" and "The Wounded Hare," show us Burns at his best morally and poetically. They disclose his profound sympathy with nature in her simplest forms, his abounding tenderness for the humblest of God's creatures, and his marvellous power to extract lessons of purest morality and wisdom from the simplest texts; while their perfect natural ease and charm of expression confer on them a beauty almost peculiarly their own. What a commentary does this little piece furnish on Shakespere's memorable dictum: "One touch of Nature makes the whole world kin!" Burns' own manifold afflictions call forth his pity for "the meanest flower that grows" in its hour of misfortune, even for an upturned Daisy. Wordsworth's sympathies were profoundly moved by this and similar effusions, more especially as they seemed to foreshadow the bard's own destiny. Allan Cunningham tells us that he changed the title of this piece and his manner of spelling his name (from Burness to Burns) about the same time.—J. H.)

Had Jean Armour not deserted him, would we ever have had this inimitably tender lyric? To the same cause we have to trace the mournful but charming episode with Highland Mary, but for which the world would have wanted not only the fine songs addressed to her, but the sublime and pathetic lines dedicated to her memory.—J. H.

TO RUIN.

(Kilmarnock Ed., 1786.)

All hail, inexorable lord!
At whose destruction-breathing word,
  The mightiest empires fall!
Thy cruel, woe-delighted train,
The ministers of grief and pain,
  A sullen welcome, all!
With stern-resolv'd, despairing eye,
  I see each aimèd dart;
For one has cut my dearest tie,
  And quivers in my heart.
    Then low'ring, and pouring,
      The storm no more I dread;
    Tho' thick'ning, and black'ning,
      Round my devoted head.

And thou grim Pow'r by life abhorr'd,
While life a pleasure can afford,
  Oh! hear a wretch's pray'r!
No more I shrink appall'd, afraid;
I court, I beg thy friendly aid,
  To close this scene of care!
When shall my soul, in silent peace,
  Resign life's joyless day—
My weary heart its throbbings cease,
  Cold mould'ring in the clay?
    No fear more, no tear more,
      To stain my lifeless face,
    Enclaspèd, and graspèd,
      Within thy cold embrace!

[Here the tone of the closing stanza of the "Daisy" is taken up, and the theme expanded into a little ode. Allan Cunningham was disposed to see in this piece some reference to apprehended

ruin through the failure of the poet's farming efforts at Mossgiel; but it was the scornful eye of Jean—"jet, jet-black, and like a hawk," that still haunted him; and he singles out, from the thick-flying darts of destruction around him, the *one* that

> . . . . "has cut my dearest tie,
> And quivers in my heart."

In the autobiography, he tells us, in reference to the occasion of the "Lament," that it nearly cost him the loss of his reason. Gilbert adds that "The 'Lament' was composed after the first distraction of his feelings had a little subsided."]

THE LAMENT.

OCCASIONED BY THE UNFORTUNATE ISSUE OF A FRIEND'S AMOUR.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

> "Alas! how oft does goodness wound itself,
> And sweet affection prove the spring of woe!"
>
> HOME.

O THOU pale orb that silent shines
  While care-untroubled mortals sleep!
Thou seest a wretch who inly pines,
  And wanders here to wail and weep!
With woe I nightly vigils keep,
  Beneath thy wan, unwarming beam;
And mourn, in lamentation deep,
  How life and love are all a dream!

I joyless view thy rays adorn
  The faintly-markèd, distant hill;
I joyless view thy trembling horn,
  Reflected in the gurgling rill:
My fondly-fluttering heart, be still!
  Thou busy pow'r, remembrance, cease!
Ah! must the agonizing thrill
  For ever bar returning peace!

No idly-feign'd, poetic pains,
  My sad, love-lorn lamentings claim :
No shepherd's pipe—Arcadian strains ;
  No fabled tortures, quaint and tame.
The plighted faith, the mutual flame,
  The oft-attested pow'rs above,
The promis'd father's tender name ;
  These were the pledges of my love !

Encircled in her clasping arms,
  How have the raptur'd moments flown !
How have I wish'd for fortune's charms,
  For her dear sake, and her's alone !
And, must I think it ! is she gone,
  My secret heart's exulting boast ?
And does she heedless hear my groan ?
  And is she ever, ever lost ?

Oh ! can she bear so base a heart,
  So lost to honor, lost to truth,
As from the fondest lover part,
  The plighted husband of her youth !
Alas ! life's path may be unsmooth !
  Her way may lie thro' rough distress !
Then, who her pangs and pains will soothe,
  Her sorrows share, and make them less ?

Ye wingèd hours that o'er us pass'd,
  Enraptur'd more, the more enjoy'd,
Your dear remembrance in my breast
  My fondly-treasur'd thoughts employ'd :
That breast, how dreary now, and void,
  For her too scanty once of room !
Ev'n ev'ry ray of hope destroy'd,
  And not a wish to gild the gloom !

The morn, that warns th' approaching day,
  Awakes me up to toil and woe;
I see the hours in long array,
  That I must suffer, lingering slow:
Full many a pang, and many a throe,
  Keen recollection's direful train,
Must wring my soul, ere Phœbus, low,
  Shall kiss the distant western main.

And when my nightly couch I try,
  Sore harass'd out with care and grief,
My toil-beat nerves, and tear-worn eye,
  Keep watchings with the nightly thief:
Or if I slumber, fancy, chief,
  Reigns, haggard-wild, in sore affright:
Ev'n day, all-bitter, brings relief
  From such a horror-breathing night.

O thou bright queen, who, o'er th' expanse
  Now highest reign'st, with boundless sway!
Oft has thy silent-marking glance
  Observ'd us, fondly-wand'ring, stray!
The time, unheeded, sped away,
  While love's luxurious pulse beat high,
Beneath thy silver-gleaming ray,
  To mark the mutual-kindling eye.

Oh! scenes in strong remembrance set!
  Scenes, never, never to return!
Scenes, if in stupor I forget,
  Again I feel, again I burn!
From ev'ry joy and pleasure torn,
  Life's weary vale I'll wander thro';
And hopeless, comfortless, I'll mourn
  A faithless woman's broken vow!

[This highly-finished poem contains passages nearly equal to any in the Address to "Mary in heaven." The reader will observe, that

every stanza contains four lines that rhyme together,—a feat in versification which "A Dream" again exhibits in a twofold degree —a double *somersault* of rhyme, in short. Dr. Currie has referred to the eighth stanza, describing a sleepless night from anguish of mind, as being of peculiarly striking excellence, nor should the finely minute touch in the third line of the second stanza "I joyless view thy *trembling* horn," be overlooked. The "trembling" could be visible only to an eye filled by a grief-begotten tear.

It is scarcely necessary to say that the "Unfortunate Friend" is Burns himself. Only dear-bought experience could have enabled him to depict thus truthfully the horrors of anger, shame, remorse, and disappointed love. The mere exercise of producing this and kindred pieces helped to soothe the poet's embittered feelings; and the wholesome excitement in connection with the printing of his poems completed the cure.—J. H.]

DESPONDENCY—AN ODE.

(Kilmarnock Ed., 1786.)

Oppress'd with grief, oppress'd with care,
A burden more than I can bear,
  I set me down and sigh;
O life! thou art a galling load,
Along a rough, a weary road,
  To wretches such as I!
Dim-backward as I cast my view,
  What sick'ning scenes appear!
What sorrows yet may pierce me through,
  Too justly I may fear!
    Still caring, despairing,
      Must be my bitter doom;
    My woes here shall close ne'er
      But with the closing tomb!

Happy! ye sons of busy life,
Who, equal to the bustling strife,
  No other view regard!

Ev'n when the wishèd end's denied,
Yet while the busy means are plied,
  They bring their own reward :
Whilst I, a hope-abandon'd wight,
  Unfitted with an aim,
Meet ev'ry sad returning night,
  And joyless mourn the same !
    You, bustling and justling,
      Forget each grief and pain ;
    I, listless, yet restless,
      Find ev'ry prospect vain.

How blest the solitary's lot,
Who, all-forgetting, all-forgot,
  Within his humble cell,
The cavern, wild with tangling roots—
Sits o'er his newly-gather'd fruits,
  Beside his crystal well !
Or haply, to his ev'ning thought,
  By unfrequented stream,
The ways of men are distant brought,
  A faint, collected dream ;
    While praising, and raising
      His thoughts to heav'n on high,
    As wand'ring, meand'ring,
      He views the solemn sky.

Than I, no lonely hermit plac'd
Where never human footstep trac'd,
  Less fit to play the part ;
The lucky moment to improve,
And just to stop, and just to move,
  With self-respecting art :
But ah ! those pleasures, loves, and joys,
  Which I too keenly taste,
The solitary can despise—
  Can want, and yet be blest !

He needs not, he heeds not,
Or human love or hate;
Whilst I here must cry here
At perfidy ingrate!

O enviable early days,
When dancing thoughtless pleasure's maze,
To care, to guilt unknown!
How ill exchang'd for riper times,
To feel the follies, or the crimes,
Of others, or my own!
Ye tiny elves that guiltless sport,
Like linnets in the bush,
Ye little know the ills ye court,
When manhood is your wish!
The losses, the crosses,
That active man engage;
The fears all, the tears all,
Of dim declining Age!

In this poem, the same theme as that pursued through the four preceding pieces is exhausted in a very satisfactory manner. Apparently tired himself of stringing mournful rhymes about Jean's "perfidy ingrate," he sets himself to give his youthful compeers the benefit of his dear-bought experience in such words as these:—

"Even when the wished-for end's denied,
Yet, while the busy means is plied,
These bring their own reward."

With enchanting words of the tenderest wisdom, he—only twenty-seven years old—speaks of his own "enviable early days," and then, as if under the sanction of mature age, addresses his young readers thus:—

"Ye tiny elves that guiltless sport,
Like linnets in the bush;
Ye little know what ills ye court,
When manhood is your wish!" &c.

Meanwhile, Jean had been sent off to Paisley, to avoid seeing her poet-lover, whose heart, like that of Nature herself, abhorred a

vacuum. At this juncture he—all unobserved—consoled himself by cultivating a "reciprocal attachment" with a generous-hearted maiden resident in his neighborhood, whose name he afterwards made immortal by the strength and beauty of his musings over the memory of those stolen interviews.]

TO GAVIN HAMILTON, ESQ., MAUCHLINE,

RECOMMENDING A BOY.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

Mossgaville, May 3, 1786.

I HOLD it, sir, my bounden duty
To warn you how that "Master Tootie,"
Alias, "Laird M'Gaun,"
Was here to hire *yon* lad away — yonder
'Bout whom ye *spak* the *tither* day, — spoke — other
An' *wad hae* don't *aff han'*; — would have — right away
But lest he learn the *callan* tricks— — boy
An' faith I *muckle* doubt him— — much
Like scrapin out *auld crummie's* nicks, * — old cows
An' tellin lies about them;
As *lieve* then, I'd have then, — willingly
Your clerkship he should *sair*, — serve
If sae be ye may be
Not fitted otherwhere.

Altho' I say't, he's *gleg* enough, — smart
An' bout a house that's rude an' rough,
The boy might learn to swear;

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* Tootie was a nick-name of "Laird McGaun," who lived in Mauchline and dealt in cows. The rings on a cow's horn, like the marks of a horse's teeth, show her age. It is the custom of fraudulent dealers, and even farmers, to scrape out certain of the rings or "nicks" to make her look younger than she is. Such persons are in Scotland, called "nick-scrapers." They correspond nearly to 'sneck-drawers"—see note on "Sneck-drawing," p. 191. We are not to suppose that Mr. McGaun, though styled a "laird," had any real claim to the title. He

But then wi' YOU he'll be sae taught,
An' get *sic* fair example *straught*, such straight
I *hae na ony* fear.* have not any
Ye'll catechise him, every quirk,
An' *shore* him weel wi' "hell;" frighten
An' *gar* him follow to the kirk— make
Ay when ye *gang* yoursel.† always go
If ye then, *maun* be then must
Frae hame this comin Friday, from
Then please sir, to *lea'e*, sir, leave
The orders wi' your lady.

My word of honor I hae *gi'en*, given
In Paisley John's, ‡ that night at e'en,
To meet the "*warld's worm;*" avaricious reptile (*Tootie*)
To try to get the twa to *gree*, come to terms
An' name the *airles* an' the *fee*, earnest-money wages
In legal mode an' form:
I ken he weel a sneck can draw, §
When simple bodies let him;
An' if a Devil be at a',
In faith he's sure to get him.
To phrase you an' praise you,
Ye ken your Laureat scorns:
The pray'r still, you share still,
Of grateful MINSTREL BURNS.

[This off-hand production explains itself. The poet was about to part with one of the boys on his farm, whose services were

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might own a "pendicle" of land of an acre or two in extent, but the title is quite often given, half derisively, to old men of some little prominence in a village or country community.—J. H.

* Note the sly caustic humor in the emphasized *you* in the fourth line of the second Stanza, and compare it with the first two lines of stanza twelfth of "Holy Willie's Prayer."—J. H.

† Another hit at Gavin Hamilton. He was threatened with church censures for his neglect of the ordinances as dispensed by "Daddy Auld." See "Holy Willie's Prayer," stanza 13.

‡ John Dow's inn. John was a Paisley man.—J. H.

§ See note "sneck-drawing," p. 191.

coveted by "Master Tootie," a dishonest dealer in cows. The boy had also attracted the attention of Gavin Hamilton, and Burns, who much preferred that the boy should serve Hamilton, wrote this note to him by way of warning.

In the second verse, the poet has imitated the "Madam Blaize" of Goldsmith—

> "Her love was sought, I do aver, by twenty beaux and more:
> The king himself has followed her—when she has walked before."]

VERSIFIED REPLY TO AN INVITATION.

(HOGG AND MOTHERWELL, 1834.)

SIR,

Yours this moment I unseal,
And faith I'm gay and hearty!
To tell the truth and shame the deil,
I am as *fou* as Bartie:* full
But *Foorsday*, sir, my promise *leal*, Thursday loyal
Expect me o' your partie,
If on a *beastie* I can *speel*, horse climb
Or *hurl* in a *cartie*. ride cart

Yours,

ROBERT BURNS.

MACHLIN, *Monday night*, 10 *o'clock*.

[From the fact of the poet's name being spelled here with one syllable, we must conclude that it was written after 14th April 1786, when he first adopted the contracted form. The original MS. which has been long preserved in the Paisley Library, affords no clue to the name of the person thus addressed.]

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* Possibly Bartie was some peasant's misnomer for the Baltic, which may have tickled Burns and his friend. "As fu' as the Baltic" is a common Scotch phrase, and "as fu' as Bartie" may be only an ignorant man's travestie of it.—J. H.

SONG—WILL YE GO TO THE INDIES, MY MARY?

Tune.—"Ewe-Bughts, Marion."

(CURRIE, 1800.)

WILL ye go to the Indies, my Mary,
  And leave *auld* Scotia's shore? old
Will ye go to the Indies, my Mary,
  Across th' Atlantic's roar?

O sweet grows the lime and the orange,
  And the apple on the pine;
But a' the charms o' the Indies
  Can never equal thine.

I *hae* sworn by the Heavens to my Mary, have
  I hae sworn by the Heavens to be true;
And *sae* may the Heavens forget me, so
  When I forget my vow!

O plight me your faith, my Mary,
  And plight me your lily-white hand;
O plight me your faith, my Mary,
  Before I leave Scotia's strand.

We hae plighted our troth, my Mary,
  In mutual affection to join;
And curst be the cause that shall part us!
  The hour and the moment o' time!

[This song, addressed to the living Mary Campbell, was composed at some date apparently from the middle of March to 14th May 1786. Whether she was then serving as a nursery-maid with Gavin Hamilton, in Mauchline, or in service elsewhere, it is impossible to determine. The popular belief is that Mary was byres-woman

or dairy-maid at Coilsfield House, when Burns set his affections on her; but that idea has no foundation that we are aware of, beyond a traditional conjecture, first printed in Chambers's "Scottish Songs," 1829. The tradition naturally took its rise from the fact so tenderly recorded by the poet, that his final tryst with her was in that neighborhood. Besides the song in our text, one or two others, identified with Mary Campbell as their subject, have been preserved. One of these is a Prayer for Mary's protection during the author's wanderings abroad; and another indicates that the frowns of fortune had determined him to "cross the raging sea," in order

> "That Indian wealth may lustre throw
> Around my Highland lassie, O."

The poet, in his autobiography, after referring to his distraction caused by Jean's supposed "perfidy," says — "I gave up my part of the farm to my brother, and made what little preparation was in my power for Jamaica; but before leaving my native country for ever, I resolved to publish my poems." On 20th March, he arranged to meet Robert Muir at Kilmarnock, to forward that object; and on 3d April, he was just "sending his proposals to the press." One would conclude that the work of arranging and preparing his poems for the printer — not to mention his industrious composing of fresh poems to fill the volume — was enough to occupy his head and hands, without the introduction of the Highland Mary episode at such a time. Nevertheless, he did manage, amid all these engagements, to cultivate the "pretty long tract of reciprocal attachment" which preceded the final parting with Mary on Sunday, 14th May. Such were the strange circumstances under which this song was composed. The inscriptions on the "Highland Mary bible," particularly noticed in connection with the song which follows, are highly suggestive of mystery and secrecy in this rash courtship and inopportune betrothal.

In October 1792, the poet offered this lyric to George Thomson as a substitute or companion-song for "The Ewe-Bughts, Marion"; but that gentleman did not adopt it. It is not to be understood from the opening line of the song, that Burns asked Mary to accompany him to the West Indies; for his words to Thomson are, "I took the following *farewell* of a dear girl."]

MY HIGHLAND LASSIE,* O.

(JOHNSON'S MUSEUM, 1788.)

NAE *gentle* dames, tho' *ne'er* sae fair, high-born e'er
Shall ever be my muse's care :
Their titles a' are empty show ;
Gie me my Highland lassie, O. give

Chorus.—Within the glen sae bushy, O,
Aboon the plain sae *rashy*, O, above rushy
I set me down wi' right *guid* will, good
To sing my Highland lassie, O.

O were yon hills and vallies mine,
Yon palace and yon gardens fine ! †
The world then the love should know
I bear my Highland lassie, O.

But fickle fortune frowns on me,
And I *maun* cross the raging sea ; must
But while my crimson currents flow,
I'll love my Highland lassie, O.

Altho' thro' foreign climes I range,
I know her heart will never change,
For her bosom burns with honor's glow,
My faithful Highland lassie, O.

For her I'll dare the billows' roar,
For her I'll trace a distant shore,
That Indian wealth may lustre throw
Around my Highland lassie, O.

---

* We note again the fine musical effect of the Scotch termination *ie*. It is not merely a diminutive, but it carries with it a feeling of endearment.—J. H.

† Referring to Coilsfield Mansion House.—J. H.

She has my heart, she has my hand,
By secret troth and honor's band!
'Till the mortal stroke shall lay me low,
I'm thine, my Highland lassie, O.

Farewell the glen sae bushy, O!
Farewell the plain sae rashy, O!
To other lands I now must go,
To sing my Highland lassie, O.

[The cuts at the end of this note, represent very faithfully the inscriptions and symbolic markings on the bible presented by Burns to Mary at their parting. The printer's date on the title-page is 1782. When Mary died, in October 1786, the volumes were taken care of by her mother, who survived till August 1828. Several years before that event, she had presented the bible to Mary's surviving sister, Anne, the wife of James Anderson, a stone-mason. That generation had passed away, when the precious relic, together with a lock of *Highland Mary's* hair, turned up at Montreal, in Canada, about the year 1840, whither they had been carried by William Anderson, a son of Mary's sister. Several Scottish residents of that city subscribed and purchased the relics from Anderson, with the object of having them deposited in the poet's monument at Ayr. Accordingly, on 1st January 1841, they were formally handed for this purpose to Provost Limont of Ayr.

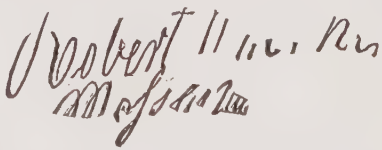
So early as 1828, Mr. Lockhart remarked that Cromek's interesting details of the parting ceremonials which are supposed to have been transacted between the poet and Mary at their final meeting, "have recently been confirmed very strongly by the accidental discovery of a bible presented by Burns to Mary Campbell, in the possession of her surviving sister." He quotes the inscription from Leviticus and St. Matthew very accurately, and adds, "that on the blank leaf opposite one of these texts is written—'Robert Burns, Mossgiel.'"

An examination of those sacred relics suggests the probability that poor Mary, on seeing the certain approach of death, had wilfully erased her own name and that of her poet lover, by wetting the writing and drawing her fingers across it, obliterating the surnames to the state in which they now appear.

On the fly-leaf of Volume I. of the bible, the name, "Mary Campbell," followed by the poet's mason-mark, had been inscribed:

the latter is still nearly entire; but the name has been almost completely erased, thus:—

The corresponding blank-leaf in Volume II. had contained the poet's name and address, with the mason-mark subjoined; but these also have been subjected to an erasing process; and now we can only trace as follows:—



(That the love of Burns for Highland Mary was of a deep and lasting character is abundantly proven by the eloquent heart throbs to which he gave utterance in "Mary In Heaven."

If Mary sunk into the grave without revealing the fact of her betrothal to Burns, it seems equally certain that Burns never whispered her name to a living soul till three years after her decease. It was only when the surpassing beauty and pathos of his sublime dirge—"To Mary in Heaven"—awakened a curiosity which he could not avoid in some degree to satisfy, that he uttered a few vague particulars of her story. It was a mysterious episode in the life of Burns, of which the world can never learn the full facts.

On the whole we incline to give assent to the utterance of his "spiritual biographer," Dr. Waddell: — "In connection with this there was neither guilt, nor the shadow of guilt on his conscience."

And ye shall not swear
by My Name falsely —
— I am the Lord —
Leevit: 19th chap: 12th Verse

— Thou shalt not forswear
thyself, but shalt perform
unto the Lord thine
Oath. —
Math: 5th ch. 33 Verse

Any Mason will recognise the solemn importance which Burns attached to this record of his vows.—J. H.)

EPISTLE TO A YOUNG FRIEND.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

May ——, 1786.

I LANG *hae* thought, my youthfu' friend, have
A something to have sent you,
Tho' it should serve *nae ither* end no other
Than just a kind memento:

But how the subject-theme may *gang*, go
  Let time and chance determine;
Perhaps it may turn out a sang;
  Perhaps, turn out a sermon.

Ye'll try the world soon, my lad;
  And, Andrew dear, believe me,
Ye'll find mankind an *unco* squad, strange
  And *muckle* they may grieve ye: much
For care and trouble set your thought,
  Ev'n when your end's attainèd;
And *a'* your views may come to nought, all
  Where ev'ry nerve is strainèd.

I'll no say, men are villains a';
  The real, harden'd wicked,
Wha *hae nae* check but human law, have no
  Are to a few *restricket;* restricted
But, och! mankind are *unco* weak, uncommonly
  An' little to be trusted;
If SELF the wavering balance shake,
  It's rarely right adjusted!

Yet they wha *fa'* in fortune's strife, fall
  Their fate we *shouldna* censure; should not
For still, th' important end of life
  They equally may answer:
A man may *hae* an honest heart, have
  Tho' *poortith* hourly stare him; poverty
A man may *tak* a neibor's part,* take
  Yet *hae nae* cash to spare him. have no

Ay free, *aff han'*, your story tell, off hand
  When wi' a bosom *crony;* comrade
But still keep something to yoursel
  Ye scarcely tell to *ony:* any

* Be inclined to befriend and help a neighbor.—J. H.

Conceal yoursel as weel's ye can
  Frae critical dissection ;
But *keek* thro' ev'ry other man, peer keenly
  Wi' sharpen'd, sly inspection.

The sacred *lowe o'* weel-plac'd love, flame of
  Luxuriantly indulge it ;
But never tempt th' illicit rove,
  Tho' naething should divulge it :
I waive the quantum o' the sin,
  The hazard of concealing ;
But, och ! it hardens a' within,
  And petrifies the feeling !

To catch dame Fortune's golden smile,
  Assiduous wait upon her ;
And gather *gear* by ev'ry wile wealth
  That's justify'd by honor ;
Not for to hide it in a hedge,
  Nor for a train attendant ;
But for the glorious privilege
  Of being independent.

The fear *o'* hell's a hangman's whip,
  To *haud* the wretch in order ; hold (*keep*)
But where ye feel your honor grip,
  Let that ay be your border :
Its slightest touches, instant pause—
  Debar a' side-pretences ;
And resolutely keep its laws,
  Uncaring consequences.

The great Creator to revere,
  Must sure become the creature ;
But still the preaching cant forbear,
  And ev'n the rigid feature :

Yet ne'er with wits profane to range,
  Be complaisance extended;
An atheist-laugh's a poor exchange
  For Deity offended!

When ranting round in pleasure's ring,
  Religion may be blinded;
Or if she *gie* a random sting, give
  It may be little minded;
But when on life we're tempest-driv'n—
  A conscience *but* a canker— without
A correspondence fix'd wi' Heav'n,
  Is sure a noble anchor!

Adieu, dear, amiable youth!
  Your heart can ne'er be wanting!
May prudence, fortitude, and truth,
  Erect your brow undaunting!
In ploughman phrase, "God send you speed,"
  Still daily to grow wiser;
And may ye better *reck the rede*, attend to the counsel
  Than ever did th' adviser!

[The young friend here so sagaciously addressed was Andrew Aiken, son of the poet's early patron Robert Aiken, to whom the "Cottar's Saturday Night" is inscribed. He afterwards engaged in mercantile pursuits in Liverpool, where he prospered, and was ultimately appointed English consul at Riga, at which port he died in 1831. Andrew's son, Peter F. Aiken, passed as an advocate in Edinburgh: but instead of practising the law, he became a banker in Bristol, where he still survives in honorable retirement.

In a holograph copy of this epistle, dated "Mossgiel, May 15th 1786," the following additional stanza is introduced, immediately after the sixth verse:—

"If ye hae made a step aside—
  Some *hap* mistake *o'erta'en* you, chance overtaken
Yet still keep up a decent pride.
  And ne'er *o'er far demean* you;*

* Do not lower yourself in the eyes of the world by unnecessary confessions and ostentatious professions of repentance.—J. H.

Time comes wi' kind oblivious shade,
And daily darker sets it;
And if *nae mair* mistakes are made, no more
The warld soon forgets it."

Chambers well remarks that "the admirable taste of the poet had doubtless observed this verse to be below the rest in terseness and point, and therefore caused him to omit it in printing."* The latter half of stanza fifth has been the subject of some criticism. In 1851, Chambers thus directed attention to it in a foot-note:—"It is not often that the sagacity of Burns is open to challenge; but here certainly he is not philosophically right. It must always be a questionable maxim which proposes to benefit the individual at the expense of his fellow-creatures, or which, if generally followed, would neutralise itself—as this would do." This objection was not relished by some of the poet's admiring countrymen: in particular, the *Scotsman*, in reviewing Chambers's labors, remarked that his comments, "when free from platitude, are not always void of offence. The spectacle of Mr. Chambers, or indeed almost any man, lecturing upon Burns as deficient in generosity, frankness, and boldness of spirit, does not harmonise with one's idea of the fitness of things."

One of the poet's early Carrick associates—the late William Niven, of Kilbride, Maybole—always asserted that this epistle was originally addressed to him, and shifted to Andrew Aiken as a more profitable investment of his rhyming ware. Niven unfortunately could never prove his assertion by production of the original; and there exists a letter from Burns to Niven dated 30th August 1786—a month after the publication of the poem—which is couched in the most friendly terms, and refers to a recent hobnobbing between the poet and him at Maybole, but contains no allusion to this "Epistle." On the other hand, the Rev. Hamilton Paul, in 1819, adverts to Niven's assertion as being a well-known fact, and calls it "the sole instance of disingenuousness which we have heard charged against Burns."]

(This "Advice to a Young Friend" takes rank with Shakespere's Advice to a Son, put in the mouth of Polonius. Together they constitute the two master-pieces of the world as precepts for the guidance of young men. "Stanza 6 on 'The sacred lowe o' weel-placed love,' is," says Waddell, "beyond criticism. . . Let every youth inshrine it, as a most precious golden maxim, in his soul."—J. H.)

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* We presume to differ from Chambers in his estimate of this verse. We consider it as good as any in the Epistle, and sound, wise and "unco" human.—J. H.

ADDRESS OF BEELZEBUB.

(EDINBURGH MAGAZINE, 1818.)

To the Right Honorable the Earl of Breadalbane, President of the Right Honorable and Honorable the Highland Society, which met on the 23d of May last, at the Shakspeare, Covent Garden, to concert ways and means to frustrate the designs of five hundred Highlanders who, as the Society were informed by Mr. M'Kenzie of Applecross, were so audacious as to attempt an escape from their lawful lords and masters whose property they are, by emigrating from the lands of Mr. Macdonald of Glengarry to the wilds of Canada, in search of that fantastic thing—LIBERTY. *

LONG life, my lord, an' health be yours,
Unskaith'd by hunger'd Highland boors; unharmed
Lord grant nae *duddie*, desperate beggar, ragged
Wi' dirk, claymore, and rusty trigger,
May *twin* auld Scotland o' a life deprive
She likes—as lambkins like a knife.

Faith, you and Applecross were right
To keep the Highland hounds in sight:
I doubt na! they *wad bid nae* better, would purpose no
Than let them *ance* out *owre* the water, once over
Then up amang *thae* lakes and seas, these
They'll *mak* what rules and laws they please: make
Some daring Hancock,† or a Franklin,
May set their Highland *bluid a-ranklin;* blood a-boiling
Some Washington again may head them,
Or some Montgomery, fearless, lead them;

* The present condition of the colony of Glengarry, Ontario, Canada, is such as must gratify the heart of every philanthropist and loyal Scotsman. The descendants of these escaped crofters of Glengarry are now a virtuous, cultured, prosperous race, as enthusiastically Highland as in the days when they "followed to the field their warlike lord." They have found not only Liberty, but Independence as well.—J. H.

† John Hancock of Massachusetts whose name stands first among the signatures to the Declaration of Independence.—J. H.

Till (God knows what may be effected
When by such heads and hearts directed),
Poor dunghill sons of dirt and mire
May to Patrician rights aspire!
Nae sage North now, nor sager Sackville,
To watch and *premier* o'er the pack vile,—act as premier
An' *whare* will ye get Howes and Clintons — where
To bring them to a right repentance—
To *cowe* the rebel generation, — awe
An' save the honor o' the nation?
They, an' be d—d! what right *hae* they — have
To meat, or sleep, or light o' day?
Far less—to riches, pow'r, or freedom,
But what your lordship likes to *gie* them? — give

But hear, my lord! Glengarry, hear!
Your hand's *owre* light on them, I fear; — too
Your *factors*, *grieves*, trustees, and bailies,* — agents, land-stewards
I canna say but they do *gaylies;* — tolerably well
They lay aside a' tender mercies,
An' tirl the hallions to the birses; †
Yet while they're only *poind't* and *herriet*, — distrained, harried
They'll keep their stubborn Highland spirit:
But smash them! crash them a' to *spails*, — chips
An' rot the *dyvors i'* the jails! — bankrupts in
The young dogs, swinge them to the labor;
Let *wark* an' hunger mak them sober! — work
The *hizzies*, if they're *aughtlins fawsont*, — girls, anyway pretty
Let them in Drury-lane be lesson'd! ‡
An' if the wives an' dirty *brats* — children
Come *thiggin* at your doors an' *yetts*, — begging gates

---

* *Bailies.* The Baron's deputy in his domains. This is not to be confounded with the *bailie* of a royal burgh. There the term answers to our *alderman.*—J. H.

† And strip the ragged rascals to their hairy hides.—J. H.

‡ Drury Lane was noted for nymphs of the *pavé.*—J. H.

Flaffin wi' duds, an' grey wi' beas',*
Frightin away your ducks an' geese; frightening
Get out a horsewhip or a *jowler*, bulldog
The langest thong, the fiercest growler,
An' *gar* the tatter'd gypsies pack make
Wi' a' their bastards on their back!

Go on, my Lord! I *lang* to meet you, long
An' in my "house at hame" to greet you;
Wi' common lords ye *shanna* mingle, shall not
The benmost neuk beside the ingle,†
At my right han' assigned your seat,
'Tween Herod's hip an' Polycrate;
Or (if you *on* your station *tarrow*), disrelish
Between Almagro and Pizarro,
A seat, I'm sure ye're weel deservin't;
An' till ye come—your humble servant,

BEELZEBUB.

June 1st, Anno Mundi 5790.

[This curious production must have been a hasty one, and not much regarded by its author. The only known copy was presented to Mr. John Rankine of Adamhill, and through him passed into the hands of a friend who sent it for publication to the editor of the Edinburgh Magazine for February 1818.

M'Kenzie of Applecross is remembered as a liberal-minded, patriotic man, who strove to improve the condition of his tenantry. His views and those of the Highland Society must have been misapprehended by the bard when he put this address into the mouth of "Beelzebub." The signature of that august personage, detached from the poem, is preserved, among other autographs of Burns, in the collection of W. F. Watson, Esq., Edinburgh.]

(This "Address" is remarkable chiefly as exhibiting the condensed energy of expression already attained by a ploughman lad who had never been twenty miles from home. The six lines beginning "Then tirl the hallions" are of matchless vigor; and yet with all their wrathful vehemence and fury every word is as accurately appropriate as if they had been written by Pope or Addison. —J. H.)

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* Fluttering in rags and grey with beasts (*lice*).—J. H.
† The innermost corner beside the fire.—J. H.

A DREAM.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

Thoughts, words, and deeds, the Statute blames with reason;
But surely, *Dreams* were ne'er indicted Treason.

On reading, in the public papers, the Laureate's Ode, with the other parade of June 4th, 1786, the Author was no sooner dropt asleep, than he imagined himself transported to the Birth-day Levee: and, in his dreaming fancy, made the following Address:—

GUID-MORNIN to your Majesty!
  May Heaven augment your blisses
On ev'ry new birth-day ye see,
  A humble poet wishes.
My bardship here, at your Levee
  On *sic* a day as this is, such
Is sure an uncouth sight to see,
  Amang *thae* birth-day dresses these
    Sae fine this day.

I see ye're complimented *thrang*, busily
  By mony a lord an' lady;
"God save the King" 's a cuckoo sang
  That's *unco* easy said ay: very
The poets, too, a venal gang,
  Wi' rhymes weel-turn'd an' ready,
Wad *gar* you *trow* ye ne'er do wrang, make believe
  But ay unerring steady,
    On *sic* a day. such

For me! before a monarch's face,
  Ev'n there I *winna* flatter; will not
For neither pension, post, nor place,
  Am I your humble debtor:

So, *nae* reflection on your Grace, no
  Your Kingship to bespatter;
There's mony *waur* been o' the race, worse
  And *aiblins ane* been better mayhap one
    Than you this day.

'Tis very true, my sovereign King,
  My skill may weel be doubted;
But facts are chiels that winna ding,
  An' downa be disputed: *
Your royal nest, beneath your wing,
  Is e'en right *reft* an' *clouted*, riven patched
And now the third part o' the string,
  An' less, will gang about it
    Than did ae day.†

Far be't *frae* me that I aspire from
  To blame your legislation,
Or say, ye wisdom want, or fire
  To rule this mighty nation:
But faith! I *muckle* doubt, my sire, much
  Ye've trusted ministration
To *chaps* wha in a barn or *byre* fellows cow-stable
  Wad better fill'd their station, would
    Than courts yon day.

And now ye've *gien* auld Britain peace, given
  Her broken shins to *plaister;* plaster
Your *sair* taxation does her fleece, sore
  Till she has scarce a *tester:* sixpence

---

* This is one of Burns' apothegms that have become world-wide: Facts are chiels that will not be overthrown and cannot be disputed.--J. H.

† The poet here alludes to the immense curtailment of the British dominions which took place only three years before writing this poem—viz. at the close of the American War, when, by the treaties of 1783, the independence of the thirteen United States was acknowledged, and the extensive territory of Louisiana, acquired by the treaty of 1763, was again restored to Spain.—*Motherwell.*

For me, thank God, my life's a lease,
  Nae bargain wearin faster,
Or faith! I fear, that, wi' the geese,
  I shortly *boost* to pasture — should behove
    I' the *crafi** some day.

I'm no mistrusting Willie Pitt,
  When taxes he enlarges,
(An' Will's a true guid fallow's *get*, — child
  A name not envy *spairges*),† — asperses
That he intends to pay your debt,
  An' lessen a' your charges;
But, G—d sake! let nae saving fit
  Abridge your bonie barges
    An' boats this day.‡

Adieu, my Liege! may Freedom *geck* — exult
  Beneath your high protection;
An' may ye *rax* Corruption's neck, — stretch
  And *gie* her for dissection!§ — give
But since I'm here, I'll no neglect,
  In loyal, true affection,
To pay your Queen, wi' due respect,
  My fealty an' subjection
    This great birth-day.

Hail, Majesty most Excellent!
  While nobles strive to please ye,
Will ye accept a compliment,
  A simple poet *gies* ye? — gives

---

* A small piece of ground adjoining the house. Hence the word *crafter* or *crofter*, one who cultivates a craft or croft.—J. H.

† Burns had a high admiration for the Earl of Chatham, father of Pitt.—J. H.

‡ In the spring of 1786, some discussion arose in parliament about a proposal to give up 64 gun ships, when the navy supplies were being considered.

§ Persons who were hanged were given for dissection.—J. H.

Thae bonie *bairntime*, Heav'n has lent, children
  Still higher may they *heeze* ye elevate
In bliss, till fate some day is sent,
  For ever to release ye
  Frae care that day. from

For you, young Potentate o' Wales,*
  I tell your Highness fairly,
Down Pleasure's stream, wi' swelling sails,
  I'm *tauld* ye're driving rarely; told
But some day ye may gnaw your nails,
  An' curse your folly *sairly*, sorely
That e'er ye *brak* Diana's pales, broke
  Or rattl'd dice wi' Charlie †
  By night or day.

Yet aft a *ragged cowt's* been known, rough colt
  To mak a noble *aiver;* cart-horse
So, ye may *doucely* fill a throne, decently
  For a' their *clish-ma-claver:* gossip and scandal
There, him ‡ at Agincourt wha shone,
  Few better were or braver;
And yet, wi' funny, queer Sir John, §
  He was an unco shaver
  For mony a day.

For you, right rev'rend Osnaburg, ‖
  Nane sets the lawn-sleeve sweeter, none
Altho' a ribban at your *lug* ear
  Wad been a dress completer:
As ye disown yon *paughty* dog, haughty
  That bears the keys of Peter,

---

* Afterwards George IV.—J. H.

† Charles James Fox, the distinguished orator and statesman, but a confirmed gambler, &c.—J. H.

‡ King Henry V.—*R. B.*

§ Sir John Falstaff, *vid.* Shakspeare.—*R. B.*

‖ Frederick, first a Bishop, and afterwards Duke of York.

Then *swith!* an' get a wife to hug, quick
Or *trowth*, ye'll stain the mitre in truth
Some luckless day!

Young, royal "*tarry-breeks*," I learn, tarry-breeches
Ye've lately come athwart her—
A glorious galley,* stem and stern,
Weel rigg'd for Venus' barter;
But first hang out that she'll discern
Your hymeneal charter;
Then heave aboard your grapple-*airn*, iron
An', large upon her quarter,
Come full that day.

Ye, lastly, bonie blossoms a',
Ye royal lasses dainty,
Heav'n mak you guid as weel as *braw*, finely dressed
An' *gie* you *lads* a-plenty! give beaux
But sneer *na* British boys awa! not
For kings are *unco scant* ay, very scarce
An' German gentles are but sma',
They're better just than want ay†
On *ony* day. any

God bless you a'! consider now,
Ye're *unco muckle dautet;* very much petted
But ere the course o' life be through,
It may be bitter *sautet:* salted
An' I hae seen their *coggie fou*, bowl full
That yet hae tarrow't‡ at it;
But *or* the day was done, I *trow*, ere ween
The laggen§ they hae *clautet* scraped
Fu' clean that day.

---

* Alluding to the newspaper account of a certain Royal sailor's amour.—*R. B.* This was Prince William Henry, afterwards King William IV. who in his youth espoused Mrs. Jordan the actress.

† German princes are of but small account as husbands for British princesses, they are just better than none.—J. H.

‡ To tarrow is to linger over a dish from distaste or satiety.—J. H.

§ The laggen is the angle between the side and bottom of a wooden dish.—J. H.

[The poet's letter to Mrs. Dunlop (April 30th, 1787,) gives us a hint of some of the difficulties he had to steer through, in his endeavors to be on good terms with patrons, and yet retain his independence. Allan Cunningham has observed that "the merits of 'The Dream' are of a high order—the gaity as well as keenness of the satire, and the vehement rapidity of the verse, are not its only attractions. Even the prose introduction is sarcastic; his falling asleep over the Laureate's Ode was a likely consequence, for the birth-day strains of those times were something of the dullest." Few poetical couplets are oftener quoted than those in verse fourth :—

> Facts are chiels that winna ding,
> An' downa be disputed.

The poem throughout has been long regarded as prophetic.] (The closing lines, which seem to prognosticate, or at least hint at, possible changes threatening the Royal Family of England similar to those which were then impending over the Bourbons, were, happily, not verified. Allan Cunningham tells us that Burns was solicited by Mrs. Dunlop and Mrs. Stewart of Stair to omit this piece from his Edinburgh edition, but in vain; and he says he has heard the neglect shown by the Government to the Poet imputed to "The Dream."—J. H.)

A DEDICATION

TO GAVIN HAMILTON, ESQ.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

EXPECT na, sir, in this narration,
A *fleechin*, *fleth'rin* Dedication, begging flattering
To *roose* you up, an' ca' you *guid*, praise good
An' sprung o' great an' noble *bluid*, blood
Because ye're surnam'd like His Grace—*
Perhaps related to the race :
Then, when I'm tir'd—and *sae* are ye, so
Wi' mony a fulsome, sinfu' *lee*— lie
Set up a *face how* I stopt short, pretence that
For fear your modesty be hurt.

The Duke of Hamilton, the premier peer of Scotland.—J. H.

This may do—*maun* do, sir, *wi'* them must / with
wha who
Maun please the great-folk for a *wamefou;* bellyful
For me! sae *laigh* I need na bow, low
For, Lord be thanket, I can plough;
And when I *downa* yoke a *naig*, cannot nag
Then, Lord be thanket, I can beg;*
Sae I shall say—an' that's *nae* flatt'rin— not
It's just *sic* poet an' sic patron. such

The Poet, some *guid* angel help him, good
Or else, I fear, some ill *ane skelp* him! one spank
He may do *weel* for a' he's done yet, well
But only—he's no just begun yet.

The Patron (sir, ye maun forgie me;
I *winna* lie, come what will *o'* me), will not of
On ev'ry hand it will allow'd be,
He's just—nae better than he shou'd be.

I readily and freely grant,
He *downa* see a poor man want; cannot
What's no his *ain*, he *winna* tak it; own will not
What *ance* he says, he winna break it; once
Ought he can lend he'll no refus't,
Till aft his *guidness* is abus'd; goodness
And rascals *whyles* that do him wrang, sometimes
Ev'n that, he does *na mind it lang;* not long remember
As master, landlord, husband, father,
He does na fail his part in either.

But then, *nae* thanks to him for a' that; no
Nae godly symptom ye can *ca'* that; call
It's naething but a milder feature
Of our poor, sinfu', corrupt nature:

---

* Burns here again refers to begging as a by no means improbable or very distasteful, *dernier resort.* See Note on the equanimity with which the Scotch peasantry contemplated this resource: "Epistle to Davie," p. 87.

Ye'll get the best o' moral works,
'*Mang* black Gentoos, and pagan Turks, among
Or hunters wild on Ponotaxi,
Wha never heard of orthodoxy.
That he's the poor man's friend in need,
The gentleman in word and deed,
It's no thro' terror of d-mn-t-n;
It's just a carnal inclination.

Morality, thou deadly bane,
Thy tens o' thousands thou hast slain!
Vain is his hope, *whase* stay an' trust is whose
In moral mercy, truth, and justice!

No—stretch a point to catch a *plack;* penny
Abuse a brother to his back;
Steal thro' the *winnock frae* a whore, window from
But point the rake that *taks* the door; enters by
Be to the poor like *onie whunstane*, any whinstone
And haud their noses to the *grunstane;* grindstone
Ply ev'ry art o' legal thieving;
No matter—stick to sound believing.

Learn three-mile pray'rs, an' half-mile graces,
Wi' weel-spread *looves*, an' lang, wry faces; palms
Grunt up a solemn, lengthen'd groan,
And damn *a'* parties but your own; all
I'll warrant then, ye're nae deceiver,
A steady, sturdy, staunch believer.

O ye wha leave the springs o' Calvin,
For *gumlie dubs* of your ain delvin! muddy pools
Ye sons of Heresy and Error,
Ye'll some day squeel in quaking terror,
When Vengeance draws the sword in wrath,
And in the fire throws the sheath;

When Ruin, with his sweeping besom,
Just frets till Heav'n commission gies him;
While o'er the harp pale Misery moans,
And strikes the ever-deep'ning tones,
Still louder shrieks, and heavier groans!

Your pardon, sir, for this digression:
I *maist* forgat my Dedication; almost
But when divinity comes 'cross me,
My readers still are sure to lose me.

So, sir, you see 'twas nae daft vapor;
But I maturely thought it proper,
When a' my works I did review,
To dedicate them, sir, to you:
Because (ye need *na tak'* it ill), not take
I thought them something like yoursel.

Then patronize them wi' your favor,
And your petitioner shall ever——
I had *amaist* said, ever pray, almost
But that's a word I need na say;
For prayin, I hae little skill o't,
I'm baith *dead-sweer*, an' wretched ill *o't*; much averse at it
But I'se repeat each poor man's pray'r,
That *kens* or hears about you, sir—— knows

"May ne'er Misfortune's gowling bark,
Howl thro' the dwelling o' the clerk!
May ne'er his gen'rous, honest heart,
For that same gen'rous spirit smart!
May Kennedy's far-honor'd name*
Lang *beet* his hymeneal flame, fan

---

*Mr. Hamilton's wife belonged to The Kennedys, an ancient and influential family in Carrick.

Till Hamilton's, at least a *dizzen*, dozen
Are frae their nuptial labors risen:
Five bonie lasses round their table,
And sev'n braw fellows, stout an' able,
To serve their king an' country weel,
By word, or pen, or pointed steel!
May health and peace, with mutual rays,
Shine on the ev'ning o' his days;
Till his wee, curlie John's *ier-oe*, great grandchild
When ebbing life *nae* mair shall flow, no
The last, sad, mournful rites bestow!"

I will not wind a lang conclusion,
With complimentary effusion;
But, whilst your wishes and endeavors
Are blest with Fortune's smiles and favors,
I am, dear sir, with zeal most fervent,
Your much indebted, humble servant.

But if (which Pow'rs above prevent)
That iron-hearted *carl*, Want, fellow
Attended, in his grim advances,
By sad mistakes, and black mischances,
While hopes, and joys, and pleasures fly him,
Make you as poor a dog as I am,
Your 'humble servant' then no more;
For who would humbly serve the poor?
But, by a poor man's hopes in Heav'n!
While recollection's pow'r is giv'n—
If, in the vale of humble life,
The victim sad of fortune's strife,
I, thro' the tender-gushing tear,
Should recognise my master dear;
If friendless, low, we meet together,
Then, sir, your hand—my friend and brother!

[In all likelihood, this characteristic effusion was composed with a view to its occupying a place in front of the author's first publication; but probably its freedom of sentiment and lack of reverence for matters orthodox would stagger its cautious and circumspect typographer. It was accordingly slipped into the book near the close, in fellowship with "The Louse," and some subjects less dainty in character than those first presented to the reader. This "dedication" is nevertheless esteemed one of the best poems in the volume; and none of the author's lines are more frequently on the lips of his readers than some of its pithy sentences. Indeed, the bard's correspondence testifies that he was himself fond of quoting its couplets occasionally. The gentleman to whom it is addressed was, in every respect, a man after Burns' own heart; and this fact is very quaintly told in the passage where he explains his reason for dedicating the poems to Hamilton:—

"Because—ye needna tak it ill—
I thought them something like yoursel."

According to Mr. Lockhart, "Hamilton's family, though professedly adhering to the Presbyterian Establishment, had always lain under a strong suspicion of Episcopalianism. Gavin's grandfather had been curate of Kirkoswald in the troublous times that preceded the Revolution, and incurred popular hatred in consequence of being supposed to have been instrumental in bringing a thousand of the 'Highland host' into that region in 1677." We rather suspect this was the great-grandfather of the poet's friend, named Claud, who died in 1699, and whose son John was a writer in Edinburgh.

Gavin's father was also a writer in Mauchline, inhabiting the old castellated mansion which still exists near the church. Cromek mentions that the Rev. William Auld had quarrelled with the senior Hamilton, and sought every occasion of revenging himself on the son. Be that as it may, our notes at pp. 95 and 97 sufficiently narrate the annoyances to which Gavin was subjected by the Kirk Session; and the author's text there, and elsewhere, shews the measure of the reprisal that followed.

One of the existing representatives of Mr. Hamilton is Major Wallace Adair, husband of a granddaughter of Gavin, and himself a grandson of Charlotte Hamilton, sister of the subject of the text.

Cromek mentions that he had seen a copy of this poem, in which one of Hamilton's great sins, in the eyes of Daddy Auld and Holy Willie, is thus neatly introduced:

He sometimes gallops on a Sunday,
An' pricks his beast as it were Monday.]

VERSIFIED NOTE TO DR. MACKENZIE, MAUCHLINE.

(HOGG AND MOTHERWELL, 1835.)

FRIDAY first's the day appointed
By the Right Worshipful anointed,
  To hold our grand procession ;
To get a *blad* o' Johnie's morals, piece
And taste a *swatch* o' Manson's barrels sample
  I' the way of our profession.
The Master and the Brotherhood
  Would a' be glad to see you ;
For me I would be mair than proud
  To share the *mercies* wi' you. good things
    If Death, then, wi' *skaith*, then, harm
      Some mortal heart is *hechtin*, threatening
    Inform him, and *storm* him, bully
      That Saturday you'll *fecht* him. fight

ROBERT BURNS.

Mossgiel, An. M. 5790.

[The masonic date appended to the foregoing rhyme, signifies A. D. 1786. Our notes hitherto, (except in connection with the bacchanalian song given at page 37,) have had no occasion to refer to the poet's passion for Free-masonry. He had, in July 1784, been raised to the position of Depute Master of St. James' Lodge, Tarbolton, from which period down to May 1788, he continued frequently to sign the minutes in that capacity. On 24th June 1786, being St. John's Day, a grand procession of the lodge took place by previous arrangement, and the lines forming the text shew the style in which he invited his brother-mason, Dr. Mackenzie, to be present on the occasion. The Lodge held its meetings in a back-room of the principal inn of the village kept by a person named Manson. It is not very clear who was the "Johnie" thus expected to dilate on morals: Professor Walker tells us it was John Mackenzie himself, whose favorite topic was "the origin of Morals."]

THE FAREWELL.

TO THE BRETHREN OF ST. JAMES'S LODGE, TARBOLTON.

Tune.—"Goodnight, and joy be wi' you a'."

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

ADIEU! a heart-warm, fond adieu;
  Dear brothers of the MYSTIC TYE!
Ye favored, ye ENLIGHTEN'D few,
  Companions of my social joy;
Tho' I to foreign lands must hie,
  Pursuing Fortune's *slidd'ry ba'*; slippery ball
With melting heart, and brimful eye,
  I'll mind you still, tho' far awa.

Oft have I met your social band,
  And spent the cheerful, festive night:
Oft, honor'd with supreme command,
  Presided o'er the SONS OF LIGHT:
And by that HIEROGLYPHIC bright,
  Which none but CRAFTSMEN ever saw!
Strong Mem'ry on my heart shall write
  Those happy scenes, when far awa.

May Freedom, Harmony, and Love,
  Unite you in the GRAND DESIGN,
Beneath th' Omniscient Eye above—
  The glorious ARCHITECT Divine,
That you may keep th' UNERRING LINE,
  Still rising by the PLUMMET'S LAW,
Till ORDER bright completely shine,
  Shall be my pray'r when far awa.

And YOU, farewell! whose merits claim
  Justly that HIGHEST BADGE to wear:
Heav'n bless your honor'd, noble name,
  To MASONRY and SCOTIA dear!
A last request permit me here,-
  When yearly ye assemble a',
One round, I ask it with a tear,
  To him, THE BARD THAT'S FAR AWA.

[An examination of the minute-book of the lodge shews that on 23d June 1786, the poet was present at a meeting preparatory to the grand procession referred to in the last piece. No other lodge-meeting was held till the 29th of July, which Burns also attended; and as the present song formed part of the volume which was put into the hands of the public on the last day of that month, we may assume that the occasion on which the poet repeated or sang the verses to the brethren was on the 23d or 24th of June. He was then full of the intention of sailing before the close of August; for we find him writing to a friend on 30th July:—

"My hour is now come: you and I shall never meet in Britain more. I have orders, within three weeks at furthest, to repair aboard the NANCY, Captain Smith, from Clyde to Jamaica."

It would appear that Captain James Montgomery (a younger brother of Col. Hugh Montgomery of Coilsfield) was, about this period, Grandmaster of St. James Lodge; and Chambers tells us that the first four lines of the closing stanza of this song refer to him. On the other hand, a little work of some pretensions, called "A winter with Robert Burns," asserts that the reference is to William Wallace "of the Tarbolton St. David's," Sheriff of the County of Ayr—a name "to masonry and Scotia dear." A note in the "Aldine" edition tells us that this half-stanza refers to Sir John Whitefoord.]

ON A SCOTCH BARD,

GONE TO THE WEST INDIES.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

A' ye wha live by *sowps* o' drink, — sups
A' ye wha live by *crambo-clink*, — versifying
A' ye wha live and never think,
Come, mourn wi' me!
Our billie's gien us a' a jink,*
An' *owre* the sea! — over

Lament him a' ye rantin *core*, — corps
Wha dearly like a *random-splore;* — occasional frolic
Nae mair he'll join the merry roar,
In social key;
For now he's *taen* anither shore, — taken
An' owre the sea!

The bonie lasses weel may *wiss* him, — wish
And in their dear petitions place him:
The widows, wives, an' a' may bless him
Wi' tearfu' e'e;
For *weel I wat* they'll *sairly* miss him — well I wot / sorely
That's owre the sea!

O Fortune, they hae room to grumble!
Hadst thou taen aff some drowsy *bummle*, — blunderer
Wha can do nought but fyke an' fumble,
'Twad been *nae plea;* — no matter / for complaint
But he was *gleg* as onie *wumble*, — sharp gimlet
That's owre the sea!

---

* Our brother has given us all the slip.—J. H.

Auld, cantie Kyle * may *weepers* wear, mourning badges
An' stain them wi' the *saut*, saut tear: salt
'Twill mak her poor auld heart, I fear,
In *flinders flee:* fragments fly
He was her Laureat *mony* a year, many
That's owre the sea!

He saw Misfortune's cauld nor-west
Lang mustering up a bitter blast;
A *jillet* † brak his heart at last, jilt
Ill may she be!
So, took a berth afore the mast,
An' owre the sea.

To tremble under Fortune's *cummock*, rod
On scarce a bellyfu' o' *drummock*, meal and cold water
Wi' his proud, independent stomach,
Could ill agree;
So, *row't* his *hurdies* in a hammock, rolled posteriors
An' owre the sea.

He ne'er was *gien* to great *misguidin*, given unthrift
Yet coin his *pouches* wad na *bide* in; pockets stay
Wi' him it ne'er was under hidin;
He dealt it free:
The Muse was a' that he took pride in,
That's owre the sea.

Jamaica bodies, use him weel,
An' *hap* him in a *cozie biel:* cover snug shelter
Ye'll find him ay a dainty *chiel*, fellow
An' *fou* o' glee: full
He *wad na wrang'd* the vera deil, would not have wronged
That's owre the sea.

---

* See p. 203. † Jean Armour.

Fareweel, my rhyme-composing *billie!* brother
Your native soil was right *ill-willie;* spiteful
But may ye flourish like a lily,
Now bonilie!
I'll toast you in my hindmost *gillie*, gill of whisky
Tho' owre the sea!

[This playful ode shines out cheerfully among the poet's more pathetic leave-takings of the period. He puts it into the mouth of an imaginary "rhyme-composing brother;" but not one of the tribe, except the bard of Kyle himself, could have produced such an original and happy strain. His own picture is painted to the life, in all his "ranting, roving Robin-hood;" and yet, amid his rollicking, he throws in a touch of the true pathetic, just to show his reader how

"Chords that vibrate sweetest pleasure,
Thrill the deepest notes of woe."

He who, only a few months before, had sung so despairingly in "The Lament," and kindred effusions, concerning

"A faithless woman's broken vow,"

here reverts to the same theme in a strain of smothered bitterness:—

"He saw Misfortune's cauld nor-west
Lang mustering up a bitter blast;
A jillet brak his heart at last,
Ill may she be!
So, took a birth afore the mast,
An' owre the sea."]

SONG—FAREWELL TO ELIZA.

Tune—"Gilderoy."

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

FROM thee, Eliza, I must go,
And from my native shore;
The cruel fates between us throw
A boundless ocean's roar:

But boundless oceans, roaring wide,
  Between my love and me,
They never, never can divide
  My heart and soul from thee.

Farewell, farewell, Eliza dear,
  The maid that I adore!
A boding voice is in mine ear,
  We part to meet no more!
But the latest throb that leaves my heart,
  While Death stands victor by,—
That throb, Eliza, is thy part,
  And thine that latest sigh!

[In the Ode on a Scotch Bard, the author took a general farewell of the "bonie lasses—widows, wives an' a'," and here he singles out one in particular, from among "the belles of Mauchline," in whom he seems to have a more special interest. The language is almost identical with that in which he addressed Jean Armour shortly before, "Tho' cruel fate," &c. (see p. 123). That he really had some of "his random fits o' daffin" with a young woman bearing this Christian name, is evident from a few words that dropped from him after his "eclatant return" from Edinburgh to Mauchline.

On 11th June 1787, in a letter to his friend James Smith, then at Linlithgow, he says—"Your mother, sister, and brother; my quondam Eliza, &c., are all well." Chambers, from a variety of circumstances, came to the conclusion that this "Eliza" was the "braw Miss Betty" of the "six proper young belles," so distinguished by the poet in his canzonette given at page 73. She was sister to Miss Helen Miller, the wife of Dr. Mackenzie, and died shortly after being married to a Mr. Templeton.]

A BARD'S EPITAPH.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

Is there a whim-inspirèd fool,
Owre fast for thought, owre hot for rule, too
Owre *blate* to seek, owre proud to *snool*, bashful / crouch
Let him draw near;
And owre this grassy heap sing *dool*, lamentations
And drap a tear.

Is there a bard of rustic song,
Who, noteless, steals the crowds among,
That weekly this arena throng,
O, pass not by!
But, with a frater-feeling strong,
Here, heave a sigh.

Is there a man, whose judgment clear
Can others teach the course to steer,
Yet runs, himself, life's mad career,
Wild as the wave,
Here pause—and, thro' the starting tear,
Survey this grave.

The poor inhabitant below
Was quick to learn and wise to know,
And keenly felt the friendly glow,
And softer flame;
But thoughtless follies laid him low,
And stain'd his name!

Reader, attend! whether thy soul
Soars fancy's flights beyond the pole,

Or darkling grubs this earthly hole,
In low pursuit;
Know, prudent, cautious, self-control
Is wisdom's root.

[The poet's labors to feed the Kilmarnock press of John Wilson with sufficient materials to make up a volume of moderate thickness were drawing to a close; and, having bade farewell to "friends and foes," he had only now to compose his own Epitaph. The Elegy on himself, given at page 128 *supra*, did not altogether satisfy him; so he tasked his muse to the utmost, and produced in the text, what, with common consent, is allowed to be equally truthful, pathetic, and sublime.

In some extempore verses, dashed off at this period, he speaks thus lightly of his probable death as the result of his intended expatriation:—

And now I must mount on the wave,
My voyage perhaps there is death in;
But what of a watery grave?
The drowning a poet is naething!]

EPITAPH FOR ROBERT AIKEN, ESQ.

(Kilmarnock Ed., 1786.)

Know thou, O stranger to the fame
Of this much lov'd, much honored name!
(For none that knew him need be told)
A warmer heart death ne'er made cold.

[The above is a kindly compliment to his warm friend Mr. Aiken—the "orator Bob" of the ecclesiastical courts, in their proceedings against Gavin Hamilton, and against Dr. M'Gill. To this gentleman, who was a life-long friend of the bard from the date of their first acquaintance, the "Cottar's Saturday Night" is dedicated. He survived the poet, till 24th March 1807.]

EPITAPH FOR GAVIN HAMILTON, ESQ.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

THE poor man weeps—here Gavin sleeps,
Whom canting wretches blam'd;
But with such as he, where'er he be,
May I be sav'd or d—d!

[Here is a characteristic turn of the poet's pen in favor of his honest, but greatly maligned, friend and neighbor, Mr. Hamilton, of whom we have already had occasion to say a good deal. He survived till 8th Feb. 1805, dying at the comparatively early age of fifty-two. A year after his death, his daughter Wilhelmina (referred to in one of the poet's letters) married the Rev. John Tod, a successor of Daddy Auld as parish minister of Mauchline. Mr. Tod died in 1844, and his wife survived till 1858, leaving several descendants.]

EPITAPH ON "WEE JOHNIE."

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

Hic Jacet wee Johnie.

WHOE'ER thou art, O reader, know
That Death has murder'd Johnie;
An' here his body lies fu' low;
For saul he ne'er had ony.

[From the day that Burns came before the world as an author till the day of his death, and seventy years beyond that event, the poet's readers had a tacit understanding that these four lines had been waggishly inserted in the last sheet of his book, as a satire—not a very wicked one—on his printer. How that understanding arose does not appear. The decent little typographer, however, (who was really a master of his own art, although, in the eyes of genius, destitute of the "divine afflatus"), was not a whit the worse of setting up in type his own "Hic jacet." He

prospered in the world, and died at Ayr on 6th May 1821. By his own instructions, his body was removed to his favorite Kilmarnock, where his true "Hic jacet" may be read in the High Church burial ground. He bequeathed, under very peculiar restrictions, a small mortification for educational purposes, to his native town, of which he was for sometime a magistrate.]

THE LASS O' BALLOCHMYLE.

(CURRIE 1800.)

Tune.—"Ettrick Banks."

'TWAS even—the dewy fields were green,
On every blade the pearls hang;
The zephyr wanton'd round the bean,
And bore its fragrant sweets alang:
In ev'ry glen the mavis sang,
All nature list'ning seem'd the while,
Except where greenwood echoes rang,
Amang the braes o' Ballochmyle.

With careless step I onward stray'd,
My heart rejoic'd in nature's joy,
When, musing in a lonely glade,
A maiden fair I chanc'd to spy:
Her look was like the morning's eye,
Her air like nature's vernal smile;
Perfection whisper'd, passing by,
"Behold the lass o' Ballochmyle!"

Fair is the morn in flowery May,
And sweet is night in autumn mild;
When roving thro' the garden gay,
Or wand'ring in the lonely wild:

THE LASS O' BALLOCHMYLE.

But woman, nature's darling child!
  There all her charms she does compile;
Even there her other works are foil'd
  By the bonie lass o' Ballochmyle.

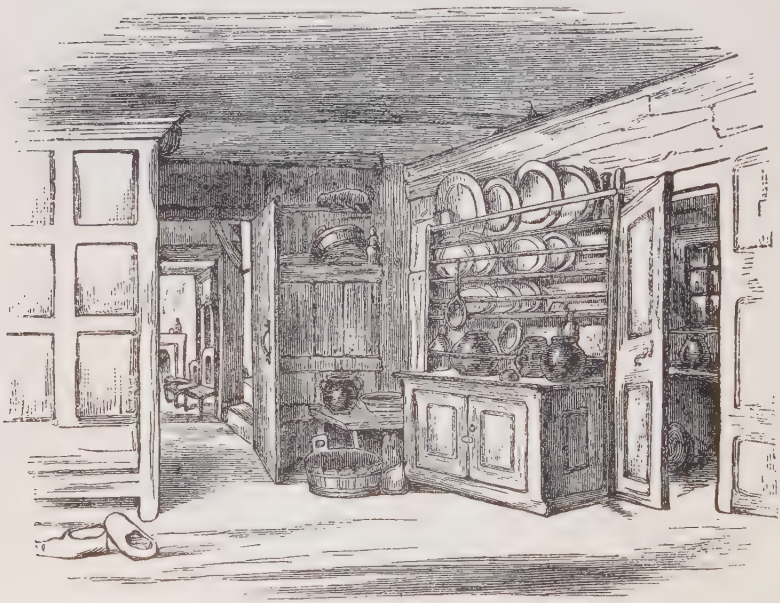
O had she been a country maid,
  And I the happy country swain,
Tho' shelter'd in the lowest shed
  That ever rose on Scotland's plain!
Thro' weary winter's wind and rain,
  With joy, with rapture, I would toil;
And nightly to my bosom strain
  The bonie lass o' Ballochmyle.

Then pride might climb the slipp'ry steep,
  Where fame and honors lofty shine;
And thirst of gold might tempt the deep,
  Or downward seek the Indian mine:
Give me the cot below the pine,
  To tend the flocks or till the soil;
And ev'ry day have joys divine
  With the bonie lass o' Ballochmyle.

[According to the poet's own information, on a lovely evening in July 1786, before the summer's heat had browned the vernal glory of the season, and while the fragrant blossom yet lingered on the hawthorn, the muse suggested this famous lyric. His correcting of the press, involving many a journey to and from Kilmarnock, was then accomplished; and while waiting, no doubt with some anxiety, for publication day, he indulged himself with one of his wonted strolls on the banks of Ayr at Ballochmyle. In these romantic retreats, while his "heart rejoiced in nature's joy," fresh animation was added to the scene by the unexpected approach of Miss Williamina Alexander, the sister of the new proprietor of that estate; and although she only crossed his path like a vision, the above verses were the result of that incident.

In a warmly-composed letter, he enclosed the song to the lady; referring with much animation to the occasion which gave it birth. That communication bears date the 18th of November 1786, when

the success of his first publication had encouraged him to drop his emigration scheme, and to resolve on a second edition to be published in Edinburgh. His professed object in addressing the lady was to obtain her consent to the printing of the song in the new edition. It would appear, however, that Miss Alexander judged it prudent not to reply to the poet's request. But a day at length arrived when she was proud to exhibit the letter and the poem together in a glass case. A few years ago, the writer of this note had the pleasure of examining that interesting production, which now hangs on the wall of the "spence" or back-parlor of the farm of Mossgiel, the place selected about twenty years ago, by the relatives of the heroine of the song, as the fittest for its



exhibition to "all and sundries." The hand-writing is more careess than usual, and shews occasionally a mis-spelled word.

Our woodcut of the interior of Mossgiel farm-house is from a drawing by Sir Wm. Allan, kindly lent by its possessor, W. F. Watson, Esq., Edinburgh.

We have only to add that the "Bonie Lass" herself died unmarried in 1843, aged 88. She must thus have been 31 years old in 1786.]

MOTTO PREFIXED TO THE AUTHOR'S FIRST PUBLICATION.

(KILMARNOCK ED., 1786.)

THE simple Bard, unbroke by rules of art,
He pours the wild effusions of the heart;
And if inspir'd, 'tis Nature's pow'rs inspire;
Her's all the melting thrill, and her's the kindling fire.

[The famous Kilmarnock volume of Burns, with the above motto, (evidently his own composition), on its title-page, was ready for distribution on the same day (30th July 1786) on which he penned an excited letter to his friend Richmond in Edinburgh, from "Old Rome Forest," near Kilmarnock. The father of Jean Armour, having learned that the poet had executed a formal conveyance of his personal effects, including the copyright of his poems, and the profits to arise from their sale, in favor of his brother Gilbert, for the up-bringing of his "dear-bought Bess," obtained a legal warrant to apprehend Burns till he should find security to meet the prospective alimentary claim of his daughter Jean. The poet, through some secret channel, heard of this; and he thus confided himself to Richmond:—"I am wandering from one friend's house to another, and, like a true son of the Gospel, have nowhere to lay my head. I know you will pour an execration on her head; but spare the poor, ill-advised girl, for my sake. I write in a moment of rage, reflecting on my miserable situation — exiled, abandoned, forlorn." We have no letters of Burns dated from home during the following month of August, which seems to have been spent in secret journeys from one locality to another, gathering the fruits of his recent publication.]

SALE OF THE KILMARNOCK EDITION.

The original of the account of John Wilson of Kilmarnock for the printing of Burns's Poems, with a list of subscribers, or rather of persons to whom Wilson gave out copies on account of the author, is in possession of Robert Cole, Esq., of 52 Upper Norton Place, London. Wilson's account is as follows :—

MR. ROBERT BURNS,

To JOHN WILSON, Dr.

				£	s.	d.
Aug. 28, 1786.—Printing 15 sheets at 19*s*.				14	5	0
19 Reams 13 quires paper at 17*s*. .				16	4	0
Carriage of the paper				0	8	9
Stitching 612 copies in blue paper at 1¾*d*.				4	9	3
				35	17	0
Aug. 19.—By cash	6	3	0			
" 28.— " "	14	13	0			
By 70 copies	10	10	0			
	—	—	—	31	6	0
				4	11	0
By 9 copies				1	7	0
				3	4	0
Oct. 6th.—By cash in full				3	4	0

Settled the above account.

Kilmarnock. JOHN WILSON.

It appears that Mr. Wilson had here, by an error in his arithmetic, undercharged the poet ten shillings —the second item in the account being properly £16, 14*s*., instead of £16, 4*s*.

Six hundred copies, at 3*s*. each, would produce £90 ; and if there were no more to be deducted from that sum than the expenses of paper, print, and stitching, there would remain upwards of £54 as profit. The poet, however, speaks of realising only £20 by the speculation.

NOTE BY EDITORS.

The poetry in the preceding pages comprises all that appeared in the Kilmarnock edition of Burns' Works, as well as many pieces written anterior to the date of the publication of that volume (August, 1786) but not appearing therein. Several of these were inserted by the poet himself in the subsequent Edinburgh editions; others were recovered after his death by Dr. Currie, Cromek, and subsequent editors, from the Common-place books in which Burns had entered them in holograph, or from friends to whom he had given copies of them. A considerable number of the songs here appearing, though all composed within this period, were printed for the first time in Johnson's Museum, the first volume of which was not issued till 1788. It will be understood then that all the poetical pieces known to have been composed before Aug. 1786 appear in this volume, but none of later date.

We now proceed to give the chronologically corresponding prose matter, premising merely that the historical portion carries us back to a date considerably anterior to the poet's birth, while the Autobiography was not written till August 1787. With this last exception (accounted for hereafter), all the poet's prose compositions (consisting entirely of letters) in this volume are of date not later than the appearance of the Kilmarnock Edition.

PROSE WORKS.

LIFE AND LETTERS OF ROBERT BURNS.

THE POET'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

INTRODUCTORY.

No one can read with full intelligence the productions of a writer of such intense individuality, and so sensitively susceptible of impressions, as Burns, who has not some acquaintance with the man himself, as well as with his life-history. His works are really a reflex not only of his mental constitution and the occasions that called them forth, but also of the conditions under which each of them was produced. Man is largely the creature of his surroundings and to know him thoroughly we must know not only the native character of his mind—his mental idiosyncracy, as it is called—but also the circumstances amid which he was cradled and grew up, and note to what extent these operated to mould his character and affect his modes of thought. All this no one can enable us to see so clearly of the Bard of Scotland as Robert Burns himself. No person of culture and refinement, moving in the higher walks of social life, can realize how a poor, half-educated peasant judges and feels—from what point of view he looks at matters, by what motives he is actuated, and what calls forth his admiration, indig-

nation or scorn—unless he get that peasant to speak out openly and frankly for himself.

It is under this conviction that we introduce thus early in this edition of the works of Burns, his Autobiography as communicated by him in a letter to Dr. Moore, written in the summer recess of 1787, betwixt the poet's first and second sojourn in the Scottish capital, thus giving the important document chronological precedence over some of his earlier writings. It would be manifestly unjust to subject a communication not designed for the public to the tests of rigid criticism. We are not to look in it for either studied elegance of expression or complete correctness of composition. But, on the other hand, it displays to us, all the more truthfully, the man himself, portrayed with all his native vigor and all his frank open-hearted sincerity. In this letter, written in the confidence of private friendship, he seems to have forgotten his own maxim :

"But aye keep something to yoursel' ye scarcely tell to ony"—

The original manuscript of the autobiography—that, namely, forwarded to Dr. Moore—is now preserved in the British Museum.* The author had retained a verbatim copy, perusal of which he granted to the Duchess of Athole, to "Clarinda" and others. This, in passing through so many hands, got into a tattered condition, and the poet caused it to be transcribed by an amanuensis into one of two MS. volumes of his then unpublished writings collected for and presented to his friend and neighbor, Robert Riddell of Glenriddell.

That copy was revised and corrected by Burns himself, and is now preserved in the Library of the Athenæum Club, Liverpool. A verbatim transcript of

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* Bib. Eg. 1660.—Purchased at Mr. P. Cunningham's sale (Sotheby's), Feb. 26 1855, lot 145.

it has been compared with the original in the British Museum and found to correspond exactly. In the following text a complete and accurate reproduction of this important document is placed before the reader, and Dr. Currie's divergences from the original, as well as his omissions, will be apparent to any one who closely compares the version appearing in his edition with this now submitted.

By aid of the valuable "Notes on his Name and Family" privately printed by the late Dr. James Burnes, Physician General of the Bombay Army, and a descendant from the same ancestral stock as the poet, we record some genealogical details which contribute to throw light on the poet's family allusions as well as to account for the strong Jacobitical bias which shows itself occasionally in his earlier productions.

The family surname was originally pronounced in two syllables, and was, in accordance with the irregularity which then prevailed in the spelling of proper names, sometimes written Burnes and sometimes Burness.* The immediate, as well as the more remote ancestors of Burns were yeomen or small farmers in the Mearns, with cherished family traditions of which they were justly proud, and traces of them are still to be found in Kincardineshire records reaching up to a period two hundred years prior to the era of the Ayrshire bard. From Dr. Burnes' researches into these records we glean the following facts regarding the poet's more immediate ancestors.

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* In earlier Scotch every vowel was sounded as a separate syllable, as is still the case in German, so that the name was pronounced in the same way whether written with a single *s* or with two. Most of the members of the family who retain the old pronunciation now spell it with the double *s*, though some, as the writer of the "Notes" above referred to, and the late Sir Alexander Burnes, the distinguished Eastern traveller, continued to follow what was probably the original spelling. As the poet, however, up to the time he changed the spelling of his name to Burns, uniformly wrote it Burness, we deem it only respectful to him to follow his own mode of spelling his own name, and to apply it to other members of the family who have not put themselves on record as spelling it Burnes.—J. H.

The parents of our poet's paternal grandfather and namesake, Robert Burness, were James Burness, tenant of Bralinmuir, in the parish of Glenbervie, who died in 1743, aged 87, and Margaret Falconer, who died in 1749, aged 90. Robert, their second son,* was married to Isabella Keith, of the family of Keith of Craig, and rented the farm of Clochnahill, in the parish of Dunotter. Of him is recorded the honorable fact that, in conjunction with some of his neighbors, he built a school-house on his farm—the first erected in the district—and shared in the expense of hiring a teacher to instruct the rising generation around.

ROBERT BURNESS AT CLOCHNAHILL, AND ISABELLA KEITH, HIS SPOUSE, HAD ISSUE AS FOLLOWS:—

1. James,	born	1717.	Became a merchant and Town Councillor in Montrose .	Died in 1761.
2. Robert,	"	1719.	Some time a gardener in England	" 1789.
3. WILLIAM,	"	1721.	FATHER OF THE POET . . .	" 1784.
4. Margaret,	"	1723.	Married Andrew Walker, at Crawton	
5. Elspet,	"	1725.	Married John Caird, in Denside	
6. Jean,	"	1727.	Married John Burness, and died without issue	
7. George,	"	1729.	Died in early life	
8. Isabel,	"	1730.	Married William Brand, a dyer in Auchenblae . . .	
9. Mary,	"	1732.	Died unmarried	

The second and third sons of this family, Robert and William, were driven, through some misfortunes that overtook the household of Clochnahill, apparently in 1748,† to travel southward in quest of employment.

* This Robert Burness was, about A.D. 1700, one of five brothers of substantial position in the Mearns, who could shew silver utensils at their tables, with other indications of wealth unusual in that county.—*Dr. Burnes's Notes*, 1851.

† A certificate (now possessed by Mr. Gilbert Burns, Dublin), dated 9th May 1748, granted to William Burness by three landowners in Kincardineshire, testifying that the bearer "is the son of an honest Farmer in this neighborhood, and is a very well inclined lad himself;" and recommending him to any Nobleman

Robert made his way into England, and William found work in Edinburgh and its vicinity for about two years. The latter particularly mentioned in after days to his children, that he had been employed at the laying out of the Meadows on the south side of the city; and that work was executed chiefly in 1749. In 1750, he accepted a two years' engagement as gardener to the Laird of Fairly in the parish of Dundonald, Ayrshire, from which he removed in 1752 to the banks of the Doon, where he served for sometime as gardener to Mr. Crawford of Doonside. Desiring to settle in life, he took a perpetual lease of seven acres of ground in the parish of Alloway, from Dr. Campbell of Ayr, with the view of commencing on his own account as a nurseryman and market-gardener. On this land, close by the roadside leading southward to the ruins of Alloway Kirk, he built with his own hands a cot-house of two apartments, to which, in December 1757, he brought home from Maybole as his bride, Agnes Brown, the mother of our author, who shall now himself take up the narrative at the point where we stop. J. H.

TO DR. MOORE.*

SIR,—For some time past I have been rambling over the country, partly on account of some little business I have to settle in various places; but of late I have been confined with some lingering complaints, origi-

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or gentleman as a fit servant according to his capabilities, affords strong presumptive evidence that William Burness had not left his paternal roof prior to that date.

* Dr. Moore was a medical man of good standing in London, and author of several works of repute, some professional, others narratives of travels, works of fiction, &c., of which his novel of Zeluco is best known. (See Burns' letter to Dr. Moore, 14th July, 1790, and to Mrs. Dunlop, January 12, 1794). He was a warm-hearted Scotchman (a native of Stirling) and was made acquainted with Burns by Mrs. Dunlop, while he, in turn brought the bard under the notice of the Earl of Eglinton —J. H.

nating, as I take it, in the stomach. To divert my spirits a little in this miserable fog of *ennui*, I have taken a whim to give you a history of myself.

My name has made a small noise in the country; you have done me the honor to interest yourself very warmly in my behalf; and I think a faithful account of what character of a man I am, and how I came by that character, may perhaps amuse you in an idle moment. I will give you an honest narrative, though I know it will be at the expence of frequently being laugh'd at; for I assure you, Sir, I have, like Solomon, whose character, except in the trifling affair of WISDOM, I sometimes think I resemble,—I have, I say, like him "turned my eyes to behold madness and folly," and like him, too frequently shaken hands with their intoxicating friendship. In the very polite letter Miss Williams did me the honor to write me,* she tells me you have got a complaint in your eyes. I pray God it may be removed; for, considering that lady and you are my common friends, you will probably employ her to read this letter; and then good-night to that esteem with which she was pleased to honor the Scotch bard!

After you have perused these pages, should you think them trifling and impertinent, I only beg leave to tell you, that the poor author wrote them under some very twitching qualms of conscience, that, perhaps, he was doing what he ought not to do; a predicament he has more than once been in before.

I have not the most distant pretense to what the pyecoated guardians of Escutcheons call a Gentleman. When at Edinburgh last winter, I got acquainted at the Herald's Office; and, looking thro' the granary of honors, I there found almost every name in the kingdom; but for me—

> "My ancient but ignoble blood,
> Has crept thro' scoundrels since the flood."

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* This lady, Helen Maria Williams, an authoress of some note in her day, will be hereafter referred to.

Gules, purpure, argent, etc., quite disowned me. My forefathers rented land of the famous, noble Keiths of Marischal, and had the honor to share their fate.* I do not use the word "honor" with any reference to political principles: *loyal* and *disloyal* I take to be merely relative terms in that ancient and formidable court known in this country by the name of "club-law." Those who dare welcome Ruin and shake hands with Infamy, for what they believe sincerely to be the cause of their God or their King, are—as Mark Antony in *Shakespear* says of Brutus and Cassius—"honorable men." I mention this circumstance because it threw my Father on the world at large; where, after many years' wanderings and sojournings, he picked up a pretty large quantity of observation and experience, to which I am indebted for most of my pretensions to WISDOM. I have met with few who understood Men, their manners and their ways, equal to him; but stubborn, ungainly Integrity, and headlong, ungovernable Irascibility, are disqualifying circumstances; consequently, I was born a very poor man's son.

For the first six or seven years of my life, my Father was gardener to a worthy gentleman of small estate in the neighborhood of Ayr.† Had my Father continued in that situation, I must have marched off to have been one of the little underlings about a farm-house; but it was his dearest wish and prayer to have it in his power to keep his children under his

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*The famous Marshal Keith, whose statue adorns the city of Berlin, was of this family, and was attainted along with his elder brother George, for participating in the rising of 1715. The family is now represented by the Earl of Kintore.

In reference to this Gilbert Burns says: "I do not know how my brother could be misled in the account he has given of the Jacobitism of his ancestors. I believe the Earl Marischal forfeited his estate in 1715, before my father was born, and among a bundle of parish certificates in his possession, I have found one, stating that the bearer had no concern in the *late wicked rebellion.*" The statements of the two brothers are quite reconcileable. Robert does not say it was his *father* who shared the fate of the Earl Marischal, but his *fore-fathers.*—J. H.

† William Fergusson, Esq. of Doonholm, then Provost of Ayr.

own eye, till they could discern between good and evil; so, with the assistance of his generous Master, he ventured on a small farm in that gentleman's estate.* At these years, I was by no means a favorite with anybody. I was a good deal noted for a retentive memory, a stubborn, sturdy *something* in my disposition, and an enthusiastic idiot-piety. I say "idiot-piety," because I was then but a child. Though I cost the schoolmaster some thrashings, I made an excellent English scholar; and against the years of ten or eleven, I was absolutely a critic in substantives, verbs, and particles. In my infant and boyish days, too, I owed much to an old maid of my mother's, † remarkable for her ignorance, credulity, and superstition. She had, I suppose, the largest collection in the country, of tales and songs concerning devils, ghosts, fairies, brownies, witches, warlocks, spunkies, kelpies, elf-candles, dead-lights, wraiths, apparitions, cantraips, enchanted towers, giants, dragons and other trumpery. This cultivated the latent seeds of Poesy; but had so strong an effect on my imagination, that to this hour, in my nocturnal rambles, I sometimes keep a sharp look-out in suspicious places; and though nobody can be more sceptical in these matters than I yet it often takes an effort of philosophy to shake off these idle terrors. The earliest thing of composition that I recollect taking pleasure in, was "The Vision of Mirza," and a hymn of Addison's, beginning, "How are thy servants blest, O Lord!" I particularly remember one half-stanza which was music to my boyish ears,—

> "For though in dreadful whirls we hung
> High on the broken wave;"

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* Mount Oliphant, some two miles from the poet's birthplace.

† The "maid" was an old woman named Betty Davidson, widow of a cousin of his mother's, who was maintained in the family and repaid their kindness by doing all the good offices in her power.—J. H.

I met with these pieces in Mason's English Collection, one of my school-books. The first two books I ever read in private, and which gave me more pleasure than any two books I ever read again, were "The Life of Hannibal," and "The History of Sir William Wallace." * Hannibal gave my young ideas such a turn, that I used to strut in raptures up and down after the recruiting drum and bag-pipe, and wish myself tall enough that I might be a soldier; while the story of Wallace poured a Scottish prejudice in my veins, which will boil along there till the flood-gates of life shut in eternal rest.

Polemical Divinity about this time was putting the country half-mad, and I, ambitious of shining on Sundays, between sermons, in conversation parties, at funerals, &c., in a few years more, used to puzzle Calvinism with so much heat and indiscretion, that I raised a hue and cry of heresy against me, which has not ceased to this hour.†

My vicinity to Ayr was of great advantage to me. My social disposition, when not checked by some modification of spited pride,‡ like our Catechism's definition of Infinitude was "without bounds or limits." I formed many connexions with other younkers who possessed superior advantages; the youngling actors who were busy with the rehearsal of parts, in which they were shortly to appear on that stage where, alas! I was destined to drudge behind the scenes. It is not commonly at these green years that the young Noblesse and Gentry have a just sense of the immense distance between them and their

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* Borrowed respectively from Mr. Murdoch, his early teacher and the blacksmith who shod his father's horses.—J. H.

† See *Twa Herds*, *Ordination*, *Epistles to Gavin Hamilton*, *&c.*, *&c.*—J. H.

‡ The MS. reads "spited pride," and so it reads in Currie's first and second editions. The epithet is changed to "spirited" in the third edition, which expression has been retained in all previous reprints of the letter save Peterson's. "Spited pride" is a common Ayrshire expression for "hurt pride," and we restore it accordingly.—J. H.

ragged play-fellows. It takes a few dashes into the world, to give the young Great Man that proper, decent, unnoticing disregard for the poor, insignificant, stupid devils, the mechanics and peasantry around him, who perhaps were born in the same Village. My young superiors never insulted the clouterly appearance of my plough-boy carcase, the two extremes of which were often exposed to all the inclemencies of all the seasons. They would give me stray volumes of books; among them, even then, I could pick up some observations, and one, whose heart I am sure not even the "Munny Begum's" scenes have tainted, helped me to a little French. Parting with these my young friends and benefactors, as they dropped off for East or West Indies, was often to me a sore affliction; but I was soon called to more serious evils. My Father's generous Master died; the farm proved a ruinous bargain; and to clench the curse, we fell into the hands of a Factor, who sat for the picture I have drawn of one in my tale of *Two Dogs*. My Father was advanced in life when he married;* I was the eldest of seven children, and he, worn out by early hardship, was unfit for labor. My Father's spirit was soon irritated, but not easily broken. There was a freedom in his lease in two years more, and to weather these, we retrenched expenses. We lived very poorly: I was a dexterous ploughman for my years, and the next eldest to me was a brother, who could drive the plough very well, and help me to thrash. A novel-writer might perhaps have viewed these scenes with some satisfaction, but so did not I; my indignation yet boils at [the recollection of] the threatening, insolent epistles from the Scoundrel Tyrant, which used to set us all in tears.

This kind of life—the cheerless gloom of a hermit,

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*He was 36 years of age.—J. H.

with the unceasing toil of a galley-slave—brought me to my sixteenth year; a little before which period I first committed the sin of rhyme. You know our country custom of coupling a man and a woman together as partners in the labors of harvest. In my fifteenth* autumn, my partner was a bewitching creature who just counted an autumn less. My scarcity of English denies me the power of doing her justice in that language, but you know the Scotch idiom: she was a "bonie, sweet, sonsie lass."† In short, she, altogether unwittingly to herself, initiated me into a certain delicious passion, which, in spite of acid disappointment, gin-horse prudence, and book-worm philosophy, I hold to be the first of human joys, our chiefest pleasure here below. How she caught the contagion I can't say; you medical folks talk much of infection by breathing the same air, the touch, etc.; but I never expressly told her that I loved her. Indeed, I did not well know myself why I liked so much to loiter behind with her, when returning in the evening from our labors; why the tones of her voice made my heart-strings thrill like an Æolian harp; and particularly why my pulse beat such a furious rantann, when I looked and fingered over her hand to pick out the nettle-stings and thistles. Among her other love-inspiring qualifications, she sung sweetly; and 'twas her favorite Scotch reel that I attempted to give an embodied vehicle to in rhyme. I was not so presumptive as to imagine that I could make verses like printed ones, composed by men who had Greek and Latin; but my girl sung a song which was said to be composed by a small country laird's son, on one of his father's maids, with whom he was

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*Gilbert Burns, in this and other episodes of the Mount Oliphant and early Lochlea periods, advances the poet's age two years.—J. H.

†Nelly Kirkpatrick by name, and according to Mrs. Begg, daughter of the blacksmith who lent him one of the two first books he ever read—"The Life of Wallace." She is the subject of his first song: "My Handsome Nell."—J. H.

in love; and I saw no reason why I might not rhyme as well as he; for, excepting smearing sheep, and casting peats (his father living in the moors), he had no more scholar-craft than I had. Thus with me began love and poesy; which at times have been my only, and till within this last twelve months, have been my highest enjoyment.

My Father struggled on till he reached a freedom * in his lease, when he entered on a larger farm, about ten miles farther in the country.† The nature of the bargain was such as to throw a little ready money in his hand at the commencement, otherwise the affair would have been impracticable. For four years we lived comfortably here; but a lawsuit between him and his landlord commencing, after three years' tossing and whirling in the vortex of litigation, my Father was just saved from absorption in a jail, by a phthisical consumption, which, after two years' promises, kindly stept in, and snatched him away to "where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest."

It is during this climacteric that my little story is most eventful. I was, at the beginning of this period, perhaps the most ungainly, awkward being in the parish. No *solitaire* was less acquainted with the ways of the world. My knowledge of ancient story was gathered from Guthrie's and Salmon's Geographical Grammar; my knowledge of modern manners, and of literature and criticism, I got from the *Spectator*. These, with Pope's Works, some Plays of Shakspear, Tull and Dickson on Agriculture, The Pantheon, Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding, Stackhouse's History of the Bible, Justice's British Gardener, Boyle Lectures, Allan Ramsay's Works, Doctor Tay-

* Often called "a break"—*i. e.*, a period at which he had the option of renouncing the lease.—J. H.

† Lochlea near Tarbolton.—J. H.

lor's Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin, A Select Collection of English Songs,* and Hervey's Meditations, had been the extent of my reading. The collection of songs was my *vade mecum.* I pored over them, driving my cart, or walking to labor, song by song, verse by verse; carefully noting the tender or sublime from affectation and fustian. I am convinced I owe much to this for my critic-craft, such as it is.

In my seventeenth year, to give my manners a brush, I went to a country dancing-school.† My Father had an unaccountable antipathy against these meetings, and my going was, what to this hour I repent, in absolute defiance of his commands. My Father, as I said before, was the sport of strong passions; from that instance of rebellion he took a kind of dislike to me, which, I believe, was one cause of that dissipation which marked my future years.‡ I say dissipation, comparative with the strictness and sobriety of Presbyterian country life; for though the Will-O'-Wisp meteors of thoughtless whim were almost the sole lights of my path, yet, early ingrained piety and virtue never failed to point me out the line of innocence. The great misfortune of my life was never to have an aim. I had felt early some stirrings of ambition, but

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* This select collection of Songs was published by Gordon of Edinburgh 1765, and entitled "The Lark." It consists of 324 pages and comprises some fine old songs and ballads, but a good deal of inferior stuff as well. It was from this source that the poet seems to have picked up such names as Chloris and Chloe, these being the fashion of the time.—J. H.

† According to most at Tarbolton, but if this is so, the poet must have been in his nineteenth year.—J. H.

‡ Burns here much exaggerates his father's aversion to him, and he was in no sense a "dissipated" man till after the date of this letter. But the very exaggeration proves with what avidity the poet's sensitive heart craved for a father's love. Gilbert Burns says: I wonder how Robert could attribute that lasting resentment of his going to a dancing-school against his will, of which he was incapable. I believe the truth was that he, about this time began to see the dangerous impetuosity of my brother's passions, as well as his not being amenable to counsel, which often irritated my father; and which he would naturally think a dancing-school was not likely to correct. But he was proud of Robert's genius, and he was greatly delighted with his warmth of heart and his conversational powers.—J. H.

they were the blind gropings of *Homer's* Cyclops round the walls of his cave. I saw my father's situation entailed on me perpetual labor. The only two doors by which I could enter the fields of fortune were—the most niggardly economy, or the little chicaning art of bargain-making. The first is so contracted an aperture, I never could squeeze myself into it: the last—I always hated the contamination of its threshold! Thus abandoned of view or aim in life, with a strong appetite for sociability (as well from native hilarity as from a pride of observation and remark), and a constitutional hypochondriac taint which made me fly solitude: add to all these incentives to social life—my reputation for bookish knowledge, a certain wild logical talent, and a strength of thought, something like the rudiments of good sense, made me generally a welcome guest. So 'tis no great wonder that always, "where two or three were met together, there was I in the midst of them." But far beyond all the other impulses of my heart, was *un penchant à l'adorable moitié du genre humain.* My heart was completely tinder, and was eternally lighted up by some Goddess or other; and, like every warfare in this world, I was sometimes crowned with success, and sometimes mortified with defeat. At the plough, scythe, or reaphook, I feared no competitor, and set want at defiance; and as I never cared farther for any labors than while I was in actual exercise, I spent the evening in the way after my own heart. A country lad seldom carries on an amour without an assisting confidant. I possessed a curiosity, zeal, and intrepid dexterity in these matters which recommended me as a proper second in duels of that kind; and I dare say, I felt as much pleasure at being in the secret of half the amours in the parish, as ever did Premier at knowing the intrigues of half the courts of Europe.

The very goose-feather in my hand seems instinct-

ively to know the well-worn path of my imagination, the favorite theme of my song; and is with difficulty restrained from giving you a couple of paragraphs on the amours of my compeers, the humble inmates of the farm-house and cottage: but the grave sons of science, ambition, or avarice baptize these things by the name of follies. To the sons and daughters of labor and poverty they are matters of the most serious nature: to them the ardent hope, the stolen interview, the tender farewell, are the greatest and most delicious part of their enjoyments.

Another circumstance in my life which made very considerable alterations on my mind and manners was —I spent my seventeenth summer* a good distance from home, at a noted school on a smuggling coast, to learn mensuration, surveying, dialling, etc. in which I made a pretty good progress.† But I made a greater progress in the knowledge of mankind. The contraband trade was at this time very successful: scenes of swaggering riot and roaring dissipation were as yet new to me, and I was no enemy to social life. Here, though I learnt to look unconcernedly on a large tavern-bill, and mix without fear in a drunken squabble, yet I went on with a high hand in my geometry, till the sun entered Virgo,‡ a month which is always a carnival in my bosom: a Charming *Fillette*, who lived next door to the school, overset my trigonometry, and sent me off in a tangent from the spheres of my studies. I struggled on with my sines and co-sines for a few days more; but stepping out to the garden one

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* This is "nineteenth summer" in Currie's edition; he has noted that the alteration was suggested by Gilbert Burns.

† The School was at Kirkoswald. He lived with Samuel Brown, a brother of his mother's, who owned a cottage in a sweet locality by the roadside about a mile from the village. It was here he became acquainted with the original characters subsequently immortalized in "Tam O' Shanter."—J. H.

‡ Sun enters Virgo on 23d August. The charming Fillette was Peggy Thomson, the subject of the beautiful "Song composed in August."—J. H.

charming noon to take the sun's altitude, I met with my angel—

> "Like Proserpine gathering flowers,
> Herself a fairer flower——."*

It was in vain to think of doing any more good at school. The remaining week I staid I did nothing but craze the faculties of my soul about her, or steal out to meet with her; and the two last nights of my stay in the country, had sleep been a mortal sin, I was innocent.

I returned home† very considerably improved. My reading was enlarged with the very important addition of Thomson's and Shenstone's Works: I had seen mankind in a new phasis; and I engaged several of my schoolfellows to keep up a literary correspondence with me. I had met with a collection of letters by the wits of Queen Anne's reign, and I pored over them most devoutly. I kept copies of any of my own letters that pleased me, and a comparison between them and the composition of most of my correspondents flattered my vanity. I carried this whim so far, that though I had not three-farthings' worth of business in the world, yet every post brought me as many letters as if I had been a broad plodding son of day-book and ledger.

My life flowed on much in the same tenor till my twenty-third year. *Vive l'amour, et vive la bagatelle*, were my sole principles of action. The addition of two more authors to my library gave me great pleasure; Sterne and Mackenzie—"Tristram Shandy" and the "Man of Feeling"—were my bosom favorites.

Poesy was still a darling walk for my mind, but 'twas only the humor of the hour. I had usually half a

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* "Paradise Lost," b. iv., l. 268. The poet must have quoted from memory. *Like* does not belong to Milton and should not have been included in the quotation.—J. H.

† To Lochlea probably.—J. H.

dozen or more pieces on hand; I took up one or other as it suited the momentary tone of the mind, and dismissed it as it bordered on fatigue. My passions, when once they were lighted up, raged like so many devils till they got vent in rhyme; and then conning over my verses, like a spell, soothed all into quiet! None of the rhymes of those days are in print, except "Winter, a dirge" (the eldest of my printed pieces), "The Death and dying words of poor Mailie," "John Barleycorn," and Songs first, and second and third. Song second was the ebullition of that passion which ended the forementioned school-business.

My twenty-third year was to me an important æra. Partly through whim, and partly that I wished to set about doing something in life, I joined with a flax-dresser in a neighboring country town,* to learn his trade, and carry on the business of manufacturing and retailing flax. This turned out a sadly unlucky affair. My partner was a scoundrel of the first water, who made money by the mystery of Thieving, and to finish the whole, while we were giving a welcome carousal to the New Year, our shop, by the drunken carelessness of my partner's wife, took fire and burned to ashes, and I was left, like a true poet, not worth sixpence. I was obliged to give up business; the clouds of misfortune were gathering thick round my Father's head; the darkest of which was—he was visibly far gone in a consumption. To crown all, a *belle fille* † whom I adored, and who had pledged her soul to meet me in the fields of matrimony, jilted me, with peculiar circumstances of mortification. The finishing evil that brought up the rear of this infernal file, was my hypochondriac complaint being irritated to such a degree, that for three months I was in a diseased state of body and mind, scarcely to be envied by the hope-

* Irvine, then the emporium of the flax-dressing trade.—J. H.

† Ellison Begbie, to whom he addressed the song, "On Cessnock Banks."—J. H.

less wretches who have just got their sentence, "Depart from me, ye cursed! etc."

From this adventure I learned something of a Town life; but the principal thing which gave my mind a turn was—I formed a bosom friendship with a young fellow, the *first* * created being I had ever seen, but a hapless son of misfortune. He was the son of a plain mechanic; but a great man in the neighborhood taking him under his patronage, gave him a genteel education, with a view to bettering his situation in life. The patron dying, and leaving my friend unprovided for, just as he was ready to launch forth into the world, the poor fellow, in despair, went to sea; where, after a variety of good and bad fortune, he was, a little before I was acquainted with him, set a-shore by an American privateer, on the wild coast of Connaught, stript of everything. I cannot quit this poor fellow's story without adding, that he is at this moment Captain of a large West-Indiaman belonging to the Thames.

This gentleman's mind was fraught with courage, independence, and magnanimity, and every noble, manly virtue. I loved him; I admired him to a degree of enthusiasm, and I strove to imitate him. I in some measure succeeded; I had the pride before, but he taught it to flow in proper channels. His knowledge of the world was vastly superior to mine, and I was all attention to learn. He was the only man I ever saw who was a greater fool than myself when Woman was the presiding star; but he spoke of a certain fashionable failing with levity, which hitherto I had regarded with horror. Here his friendship did me a mischief, and the consequence was that soon after I resumed the plough, I wrote the enclosed "Welcome." †

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* So in the MS. meaning *most excellent*, a favorite form of expression with Burns. This was Mr. Richard Brown, who afterwards became one of the poet's correspondents.

† Burns' sojourn in Irvine did him harm morally as well as financially, the consequence of which was that immediately on his return to Lochlea he fell

My reading was only increased by two stray volumes of Pamela, and one of Ferdinand Count Fathom, which gave me some idea of novels. Rhyme, except some religious pieces which are in print, I had given up; but meeting with Fergusson's Scotch Poems, I strung anew my wildly-sounding, rustic lyre with emulating vigor.* When my Father died, his all went among the rapacious hell-hounds that growl in the kennel of justice; but we made a shift to scrape a little money in the family amongst us, with which, (to keep us together) my brother and I took a neighboring farm. My brother wanted my hare-brained imagination, as well as my social and amorous madness; but in good sense, and every sober qualification, he was far my superior.†

I entered on this farm with a full resolution "Come, go to, I will be wise!" I read farming books, I calculated crops; I attended markets; and in short, in spite of the devil, the world, and the flesh, I believe I should have been a wise man; but the first year, from unfortunately buying in bad seed; the second, from a late harvest, we lost half of both our crops. This overset all my wisdom, and I returned, "like the dog to his vomit, and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire." I now began to be

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into his first "mistake." The "Welcome" he refers to is his "Welcome" to his illegitimate daughter, his "dear-bought Bess." See p. 69.—J. H.

* Burns studied Fergusson with absolute veneration, never dreaming that the scholar was infinitely greater than the master. In Fergusson's works it is easy to recognize the models of versification which he followed, and occasionally we discover pieces he imitated. Burns' favorite stanza—that namely he adopted in pieces of such various character as "Holy Willie's Prayer," "Death and Dying Words of Poor Mailie," "Verses to a Mouse" and "To a Mountain Daisy"—is very ancient in Scottish poetry. Fergusson found it in Ramsay—Ramsay found it in Hamilton of Gilbertfield, who took as his model Semple of Beltrees to whom it was suggested by earlier rhymers.—J. H.

† No one placed a higher value on the prosaic virtues of good sense and prudence than our poet, and few had a larger endowment of them or more earnestly inculcated their practice on others (See "Epistle To a Young Friend," p. 293) but their admonitions were too often drowned in the "Siren Voice" of his emotional impulses. For his estimate of his own character, see "A Bard's Epitaph," his Letter to Miss Chalmers, 1793, &c., &c.—J. H.

known in the neighborhood as a maker of rhymes. The first of my poetic offspring that saw the light, was a burlesque lamentation on a quarrel between two Reverend Calvinists, both of them *dramatis personæ* in my "Holy Fair." I had an idea myself that the piece had some merits; but, to prevent the worst, I gave a copy of it to a friend who was very fond of these things, and told him I could not guess who was the author of it, but that I thought it pretty clever. With a certain side of both clergy and laity, it met with a roar of applause. "Holy Willie's Prayer" next made its appearance, and alarmed the kirk-session so much, that they held three several meetings to look over their holy artillery, if any of it was pointed against profane rhymers. Unluckily for me my idle wanderings led me on another side, point-blank, within reach of their heaviest metal. This is the unfortunate story alluded to in my printed poem, "The Lament."* 'Twas a shocking affair, which I cannot yet bear to recollect, and it had very nearly given me one or two of the principal qualifications for a place among those who have lost the chart, and mistaken the reckoning, of rationality. I gave up my part of the farm to my brother; as in truth it was only nominally mine (for stock I had none to embark in it), and made what little preparation was in my power for Jamaica. Before leaving my native country, however, I resolved to publish my poems. I weighed my productions as impartially as in my power; I thought they had merit; and 'twas a delicious idea that I should be called a clever fellow, even tho' it should never reach my ears —a poor negro-driver—or perhaps gone to the world of spirits, a victim to that inhospitable clime. I can truly say, that *pauvre inconnu* as I then was, I had pretty nearly as high an idea of myself and my works

* See page 279. "The Lament" bewails the unfortunate issue of his amour with Jean Armour.—J. H.

as I have at this moment. It was ever my opinion that the great, unhappy mistakes and blunders, both in a rational and religious point of view, of which we see thousands daily guilty, are owing to their ignorance or mistaken notions of themselves. To know myself, had been all along my constant study. I weighed myself, alone; I balanced myself with others; I watched every means of information, how much ground I occupied as a man and as a poet; I studied assiduously Nature's design, where she seemed to have intended the various *lights* and *shades* in my character. I was pretty sure my poems would meet with some applause; but at the worst, the roar of the Atlantic would deafen the voice of Censure, and the novelty of West Indian scenes would make me forget Neglect.* I threw off six hundred copies, of which I had got subscriptions for about three hundred and fifty. My vanity was highly gratified by the reception I met with from the public; besides pocketing (all expenses deducted), near twenty pounds. This last came very seasonably, as I was about to indent myself, for want of money to pay my freight. So soon as I was master of nine guineas, the price of wafting me to the Torrid Zone, I bespoke a passage in the very first Ship that was to sail, for

"Hungry ruin had me in the wind."

I had for some time been skulking from covert to covert, under all the terrors of a jail; as some ill-advised, ungrateful people† had uncoupled the merciless legal pack at my heels. I had taken the last farewell of my few friends; my chest was on the road to

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* Compare Burns' justifiable self-confidence in himself as expressed here, with his real modesty when comparing himself with his brother (see page 346). He had already acquired a large measure of the much-desired gift of self-knowledge—of "seeing himself as others saw him."—J. H.

† Jean Armour's parents.—J. H.

Greenock; I had composed a song, "The gloomy night is gathering fast," which was to be the last effort of my muse in Caledonia, when a letter from Dr. Blacklock to a friend of mine * overthrew all my schemes, by rousing my poetic ambition. The Doctor belonged to a class of critics for whose applause I had not even dared to hope. His idea, that I would meet with every encouragement for a second edition, fired me so much that away I posted for Edinburgh without a single acquaintance in town, or a single letter of recommendation in my pocket. The baneful star that had so long presided in my Zenith, for once made a revolution to the Nadir; and the providential care of a good God placed me under the patronage of one of his noblest creatures, the Earl of Glencairn. "*Oubliez moi, grand Dieu, si jamais je l' oublie!*"

I need relate no farther. At Edinburgh I was in a new world; I mingled among many classes of men, but all of them new to me, and I was all attention to "catch the manners living as they rise."

You can now, Sir, form a pretty near guess of what sort of a Wight he is, whom for some time you have honored with your correspondence. That Whim and Fancy, keen sensibility and riotous passions, may still make him zig-zag in his future path of life, is very probable; but, come what will, I shall answer for him—the most determinate integrity and honor [shall ever be his guiding-stars;] † and though his evil star should again blaze in his meridian with tenfold more direful influence, he may reluctantly tax friendship with pity, but no more.

My most respectful compliments to Miss Williams. The very elegant and friendly letter she honored me with a few days ago, I cannot answer at present, as

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* The Rev. George Lawrie of Loudon.—J. H.

† The words within brackets are not in the MS., but the sentence is incomplete without them or some words of similar import.—J. H.

my presence is required at Edinburgh for a week or so, and I set off to-morrow.

I enclose you "Holy Willie" for the sake of giving you a little further information of the affair than Mr. Creech could do. An Elegy I composed the other day on Sir James H. Blair, if time allow, I will transcribe. The merit is just mediocre.

If you will oblige me so highly and do me so much honor as now and then to drop me a line, please direct to me at Mauchline, Ayrshire. With the most grateful respect, I have the honor to be, Sir, your very humble servant,

ROBT. BURNS.

MAUCHLINE, *2nd August*, 1787.

Direct to me at Mauchline, Ayrshire.

EDINBURGH, *23rd September.*

SIR,—The foregoing letter was unluckily forgot among other papers at Glasgow on my way to Edinburgh. Soon after I came to Edinburgh I went on a tour through the Highlands, and did not recover the letter till my return to town, which was the other day. My ideas, picked up in my pilgrimage, and some rhymes of my earlier years, I shall soon be at leisure to give you at large—so soon as I hear from you whether you are in London. I am, again, Sir, yours most gratefully, R. BURNS.*

The foregoing letter to Dr. Moore, which furnishes such a masterly panoramic view of the writer's early life down to his twenty-ninth year, although abundantly confirming our in-

* Foot-note by Dr. Currie, 1800. "There are various copies of this letter in the author's handwriting; and one of these, evidently corrected, is in the book in which he copied several of his letters. This has been used for the press, with some omissions, and one slight alteration suggested by Gilbert Burns."

troductory statement that without such a self-portrayal our knowledge of the poet must be incomplete, is yet too concise to satisfy the thirst for every detail in the early career of a man in whom the whole world feels a deep and growing interest. We shall therefore, before presenting the reader with the earliest known specimen of the author's prose composition, retrace our steps, with a view of supplying some missing links in the biographic chain of events, and of rendering the story of the bard's earlier years as complete as possible.

Alloway—Early Nurture—John Murdoch.

The record of the poet's birth contained in the session books of the conjoined parishes of Alloway and Ayr is as follows :—

"Robert Burns, lawful son of William Burns in Alloway, and Agnes Brown his spouse, was born in January 25th, 1759: baptised by Mr. William Dalrymple. Witnesses, John Tennant and James Young." *

Dr. Currie narrates that the future poet was sent "In his sixth year to a school at Alloway Miln, about a mile distant from the cottage, taught by a person named Campbell; but this teacher being in a few months appointed master of the workhouse at Ayr, William Burness, in conjunction with some other heads of families, engaged John Murdoch in his stead." The latter was a promising student, about eighteen years old, when in May 1765, he was thus incidentally made instrumental in training the mind of Scotland's national poet. The little house then selected for use as a school still exists on the roadside, directly opposite the cottage in which his celebrated pupil was born. "In that cottage," wrote Murdoch in 1799, "of which I myself was at times an inhabitant, I really believe there dwelt a larger portion of content than in any palace in Europe. . . . My five employers undertook to board me by turns, and to make up a certain salary at the end of the year, provided my quarterly payments from the dif-

* The reader will observe that the family name is not here spelled as if pronounced with two syllables, but is in the form into which the poet and his brother Gilbert agreed to contract it in April 1786. The explanation is that in Ayrshire the compressed mode had been established by familiar usage, while in the North, the old spelling and pronunciation were retained. It is also interesting to note that "John Tennant," one of the witnesses of the poet's baptism, was an early Ayrshire friend of William Burness, afterwards known as "John Tennant in Glenconnor," of which fact we shall afterwards adduce proof. The Rev. William Dalrymple survived to know Burns as a distinguished poet and to be himself a subject of panegyric in his verses.

ferent pupils did not amount to that sum." Murdoch conducted this little school for nearly two years and a half; but considerably prior to the close of that engagement, William Burness had removed with his family to Mount Oliphant, above two miles south-eastward, a bleak upland farm of seventy acres, which he leased from his kind employer and patron, Provost Ferguson.

Mount Oliphant—Parental Training—Early Hardships.

The date of the lease, (the original of which is now possessed by Mr. Gilbert Burns, of Dublin) is 1765; but the family did not begin to reside on the farm till Whitsunday 1766. That removal interrupted the progress of the poet's education under Murdoch, who records that, in consequence of the distance, the boys could not attend school regularly. Gilbert adds that "there being no school near us, and our little services being useful on the farm, my father undertook to teach us arithmetic in the winter evenings by candle-light; and in this way my two elder sisters got all the education they ever received."

Another kind of education, which was of much use to Burns in afterlife, and to which he makes special reference in the Autobiography, was that received from his mother's relative, Betty Davidson, who lived in family with them, and who assisted in implanting in his infantile and boyish mind the latent seeds of poetry. According to Mrs. Begg's remembrance, Betty endeavored to requite the kindness of William Burns by her assiduity in spinning, carding, and doing all kinds of good offices that were in her power, and she was a great favorite with the children.

"Nothing," says Gilbert, "could be more retired than our general manner of living at Mount Oliphant; we rarely saw anybody but the members of our own family. There were no boys of our own age or near it in the neighborhood; indeed my father was for some time almost the only companion we had. He conversed familiarly on all subjects with us, as if we had been men, and was at great pains, as we accompanied him in the labors of the farm, to lead the conversation to such subjects, as might tend to increase our knowledge, or confirm us in virtuous habits." The devoted parent borrowed books for the instruction of his children, and "Robert read all these with an avidity and industry scarcely to be equalled; and no book was so voluminous as to slacken his industry, or so antiquated as to damp his researches."

During a summer quarter of 1772, according to Gilbert's narra-

THE BIRTHPLACE OF BURNS.

THE BIRTHPLACE OF BURNS.

tive, Robert and he were sent "week about" to the parish school of Dalrymple, distant about three miles, to improve their handwriting. One of Robert's school exercises there—eight lines of verse on the value of Religion—he retained throughout life and loved to quote to serious correspondents. It was there also that he formed the acquaintanceship of James Candlish, who afterwards married the wittiest of the "Mauchline Belles," became a distinguished lecturer on Medicine in Edinburgh, and the father of a still more distinguished son—the late Principal Candlish of the Free Church College, Edinburgh.

Meanwhile, in this same year (1772), the poet's early tutor, John Murdoch, was appointed to succeed David Tennant as teacher of the English School at Ayr. "This was," wrote Gilbert, "a circumstance of considerable importance to us; the remembrance of my father's former friendship, and his attachment to my brother, made him do everything in his power for our improvement." In particular, Robert went to Ayr a little before the harvest season of 1773, and lodged with Murdoch during a few weeks, for the purpose of revising English Grammar, &c., "that he might be the better qualified to instruct his brothers and sisters at home." A week's study sufficed to make him master of the parts of speech, and the remaining portion of that visit was spent in acquiring a pretty general knowledge of the French language. This worthy schoolmaster, who had so materially contributed towards the proper cultivation of his distinguished pupil's mind, thus modestly concludes his description of the manly qualities and Christian virtues of William Burness:—"Although I cannot do justice to the character of this worthy man, yet you will perceive from these few particulars *what kind of person had the principal part in the education of the Poet.* He spoke the English language with more propriety, both with respect to diction and pronunciation, than any man I ever knew, with no greater advantages: this had a very good effect on the boys, who began to talk and reason like men much sooner than their neighbors."

It must have been about this period that the venerated parent compiled for the use of his children a little manual of religious belief in the form of a dialogue between a father and his son. That document, carefully transcribed in the hand-writing of John Murdoch, is now in the possession of Mr. Gilbert Burns of Dublin,* who also is custodier of the "big Ha'-Bible" which belonged to William Burness, containing on one of its fly leaves the following Family Register entered by his own hand:—

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*This interesting relic was first printed at Kilmarnock, 1875, and we here give an accurate reprint of it. Notwithstanding Mr. Murdock's high testimony to the

"William Burness was born, 11th November 1721.
Agnes Brown was born, 17th March 1732. Married together, 15th December 1757.
Had a son Robert, 25th January 1759.
Had a son Gilbert, 28th September 1760.
Had a daughter Agnes, 30th September 1762.
Had a daughter Annabella, 14th November 1764.

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character and attainments of William Burness, no one who reads the two letters following this "Dialogue" will be inclined to believe that the latter is the worthy man's unaided production. Murdoch, we know, transcribed the copy given him by Mr. Burness and made the necessary grammatical corrections on it. It is almost certain he did more for it than this, for it is scarcely credible that the writer of the meagre letter to James Burness, Montrose, could, without assistance, produce such a coherent and logical compendium as this manual. Murdoch was a resident in the family at the date of its compilation, and there can be little doubt he helped his friend to put his ideas into shape. Whether these ideas were original or borrowed, more or less, from some other manual of the same kind, or whether they were developed and formulated in the course of conversations and discussions with Murdoch, it is now impossible to say.

One thing is clear William Burness was not satisfied with the rigid Calvinism inculcated in "The Shorter Catechism of the Westminster Assembly of Divines." This compendium of sound doctrine was taught to every Presbyterian child attending school in Scotland, and, when parents did not object, to non-presbyterian youngsters as well. Besides, every decent head of a house examined ("tairged") his children, and household generally, on the Westminster Catechism ("carritch") each Sunday evening. That Burns' father was in the habit of doing so we learn from the poet's "Letter to Gavin Hamilton" (Vol. I. p. 285). Evidently this manual—whether compiled by William Burness himself or simply in accordance with his wishes and suggestions—was prepared with the view of mitigating to his children the rigid Calvinism of the orthodox Catechism, and after reading it we can the more easily understand how Robert should have from the first, showed a leaning towards the "New Light."—J. H.

A Manual of Religious Belief, in form of a Dialogue between Father and Son.

Compiled by Wm. Burness, farmer at Mount Oliphant, Ayrshire, and transcribed, with grammatical corrections, by John Murdoch, Teacher.

Son. Dear Father, you have often told me, while you were initiating me into the Christian Religion, that you stood bound for me, to give me a Christian education, and recommended a religious life to me. I would therefore, if you please, ask you a few questions that may tend to confirm my faith, and clear its evidence to me.

Father. My Dear Child, with gladness I will resolve to you (so far as I am able), any question you shall ask, only with this caution, that you will believe my answers, if they are founded in the Word of God.

Question. How shall I evidence to myself that there is a God?

Answer. By the works of creation: for nothing can make itself; and this fabric of Nature demonstrates its Creator to be possessed of all possible perfection, and for that cause we owe all that we have to Him.

Question. If God be possessed of all possible perfection, ought not we then to love Him as well as fear Him?

Answer. Yes; we ought to serve Him out of love, for His perfections give us delightful prospects of His favor and friendship, for if we serve Him out of love,

Had a son William, 30th July 1767.
Had a son John, 10th July 1769.
Had a daughter Isbal, 27th June 1771."

At the Martinmas following the birth of Isabella, the youngest child of the family, the first break in the lease of Mount

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we will endeavor to be like Him, and God will love His own image, and if God love us, He will rejoice over us and do us good.

Question. Then one would think this were sufficient to determine all men to love God; but how shall we account for so much wickedness in the world?

Answer. God's Revealed Word teaches us that our first parents brake His Covenant, and deprived us of the influences of His Grace that were to be expected in that state, and introduced Sin into the world; and the Devil, that great enemy of God and man, laying hold on this instrument, his kingdom has made great progress in the world.

Question. But has God left His own rational offspring thus, to the tyranny of His and their enemy?

Answer. No: for God hath addressed His rational creatures, by telling them in His Revealed Word, that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the Serpent, or Devil, or in time destroy his kingdom; and in the meantime, every one oppressed with the tyranny of the Devil, should, through the promised seed, by faith in Him, and humble supplication, and a strenuous use of their own faculties, receive such measures of Grace, in and through the method of God's conveyance, as should make them able to overcome.

Question. But by what shall I know that this is a revelation of God, and not a cunningly devised fable?

Answer. A revelation of God must have these four marks. 1. It must be worthy of God to reveal; 2. It must answer all the necessities of human nature. 3. It must be sufficiently attested by miracles; and 4. It is known by prophecies and their fulfilment. That it is worthy of God is plain, by its addressing itself to the reason of men, and plainly laying before them the dangers to which they are liable, with motives and arguments to persuade them to their duty, and promising such rewards as are fitted to promote the happiness of a rational soul. Secondly, it provides for the guilt of human nature, making an atonement by a Mediator; and for its weakness by promising the assistance of God's Spirit; and for its happiness, by promising a composure of mind, by the regulation of its faculties, and reducing the appetites and passions of the body unto the subjection of reason enlightened by the Word of God, and by a resurrection of the body, and a glorification of both soul and body in heaven, and that to last through all eternity. Thirdly, as a miracle is a contradiction of known laws of Nature, demonstrating that the worker has the power of Nature in his hands, and consequently must be God, or sent by His commission and authority from Him, to do such and such things. That this is the case in our Scriptures is evident both by the prophets, under the Old, and our Saviour under the New Testament. Whenever it served for the glory of God, or for the confirmation of their commissions, all Nature was obedient to them; the elements were at their command, also the sun and moon, yea, Life and Death. Fourthly, that prophecies were fulfilled at the distance of many hundreds of years is evident by comparing the following texts of Scripture:—Gen. xlix. 10, 11; Matt. xxi. 5; Isa. vii. 14; Matt. i. 22, 23; Luke i. 34; Isa. xl. 1; Matt. iii. 3; Mark i. 3; Luke iii. 4; John i. 23; Isa. xlii. 1, 2, 3, 4. A description of the character of Messiah in the Old Testament Scriptures is fulfilled in all the Evangelists. In Isa. l. 5, His sufferings are prophesied, and exactly fulfilled in the New Testament, Matt. xxvi. 67, and xxvii. 26; and many others, as that Abraham's seed should be strangers in a strange land,

Oliphant occurred. Gilbert has recorded that by a stipulation in the lease, his father had a right to throw it up, if he thought proper, at the end of every sixth year. He attempted to fix himself in a better farm at the end of the first six years, but failing in that attempt, he continued where he was for six years more. Burns himself, immediately after referring to his three weeks'

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four hundred years, and being brought to Canaan, and its accomplishment in the days of Joseph, Moses, and Joshua.

Question. Seeing the Scriptures are proven to be a revelation of God to His creatures, am I not indispensably bound to believe and obey them?

Answer. Yes.

Question. Am I equally bound to obey all the laws delivered to Moses upon Mount Sinai?

Answer. No: the laws delivered to Moses are of three kinds: first, the Moral Law, which is of eternal and indispensable obligation on all ages and nations; Secondly, the law of Sacrifices and ordinances were only Ordinances in which were couched types and shadows of things to come, and when that dispensation was at an end, this law ended with them, for Christ is the end of the law for righteousness; Thirdly, laws that respected the Jewish commonwealth can neither be binding on us, who are not of that commonwealth, nor on the Jews, because their commonwealth is at an end.

Question. If the Moral Law be of indispensable obligation, I become bound to perfect and perpetual obedience, of which I am incapable, and on that account cannot hope to be justified and accepted with God.

Answer. The Moral Law as a rule of life, must be of indispensable obligation, but it is the glory of the Christian religion, that if we be upright in our endeavors to follow it and sincere in our repentance, upon our failing or shortening, we shall be accepted according to what we have, and shall increase in our strength, by the assistance of the Spirit of God co-operating with our honest endeavors.

Question. Seeing the assistance of the Spirit of God is absolutely necessary for salvation, hath not God clearly revealed by what means we may obtain this great blessing?

Answer. Yes: the Scriptures tell us that the Spirit of God is the purchase of Christ's mediatorial office; and through faith in Him, and our humble prayers to God through Christ, we shall receive such measures thereof as shall answer our wants.

Question. What do you understand by Faith?

Answer. Faith is a firm persuasion of the Divine mission of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that He is made unto us of God, wisdom, righteousness, and complete redemption; or as He is represented to us under the notion of a root, and we the branches, deriving all from Him; or as the head, and we the members of His body; intimating to us that this is the way or channel through which God conveys His blessings to us, and we are not to expect them but in God's own way. It is therefore a matter of consequence to us, and therefore we ought with diligence to search the Scriptures, had the extent of His commission, or what they declare Him to be, and to receive Him accordingly, and to acquiesce in God's plan of salvation.

Question. By what shall I know that Jesus Christ is really the person that was prophesied of in the Old Testament; or that He was that seed of the woman that was to destroy the kingdom of Sin?

Answer. Besides the Scriptures fore-cited, which fully prove Him to be that blessed person, Christ did many miracles: He healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, made the lame to walk, raised the dead, and fed thousands with a few loaves, &c. He foretold His own death and resurrection, and the wonderful pro

abode with Murdoch in 1772, at the Ayr Grammar School, and his distress at parting with some of his fellow-pupils of superior rank in life, as they occasionally went off for the East or West Indies, adds—"But I was soon called to more serious evils; my father's generous master died; the farm proved a ruinous bargain; and, to clench the curse, we fell into the hands of a factor," &c. Gilbert

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gress of His religion, in spite of all the power of the Roman Empire—and that, by means of His disciples, a few poor illiterate fishermen.

Question. You speak of repentance as absolutely necessary to salvation—I would like to know what you mean by repentance?

Answer. I not only mean a sorrowing for sin, but a laboring to see the malignant nature of it; as setting nature at variance with herself, by placing the animal part before the rational, and thereby putting ourselves on a level with the brute beasts, the consequence of which will be an intestine war in the human frame, until the rational part be entirely weakened, which is Spiritual Death, and which in the nature of the thing renders us unfit for the society of God's spiritual kingdom, and to see the beauty of holiness. On the contrary, setting the rational part above the animal, though it promote a war in the human frame, every conflict and victory affords us grateful reflection, and tends to compose the mind more and more, not to the utter destruction of the animal part, but to the real and true enjoyment of both, by placing Nature in the order that its Creator designed it, which, in the natural consequences of the thing, promotes Spiritual Life, and renders us more and more fit for Christ's spiritual kingdom; and not only so, but gives to animal life pleasure and joy that we never could have had without it.

Question. I should be glad to hear you at large upon religion, giving pleasure to animal life; for it is represented as taking up our cross and following "Christ."

Answer. Our Lord honestly told His disciples of their danger, and what they were to expect by being His followers, that the world would hate them, and for this reason, because they were not of the world, even as He also was not of the world; but He gives them sufficient comfort, showing that He had overcome the world: as if He had said, "you must arm yourself with a resolution to fight, for if you be resolved to be My disciples, you expose the world, by setting their folly in its true light, and therefore every one who is not brought over by your example, will hate and oppose you as it hath Me; but as it hath had no advantage against Me, and I have overcome it, if you continue the conflict, you, by My strength, shall overcome likewise;" so that this declaration of our Lord cannot damp the pleasures of life when rightly considered, but rather enlarges them. The same revelation tells us, that a religious life hath the promise of the life that now is, and that which is to come; and not only by the well regulated mind described in my last answer, as tending to give pleasure and quiet, but by a firm trust in the providence of God, and by the help of an honest calling industriously pursued, we shall receive such a portion of the comfortable things of this life as shall be fittest for promoting our eternal interest, and that under the direction of infinite wisdom and goodness; and that we shall overcome all our difficulties by being under the protection of infinite power. These considerations cannot fail to give a relish to all the pleasures of life. Besides the very nature of the thing giving pleasure to a mind so regular as I have already described, it must exalt the mind above those irregular passions that jar and are contrary one to another, and distract the mind by contrary pursuits, which is described by the Apostle with more strength in his Epistle to the Romans (Chap. i., from 26 to the end) than any words I am capable of framing; especially if we take our Lord's explanation of the parable of the tares in the field as an improvement of these

also, in his narrative says—"My father in consequence of the wretched soil, soon came into difficulties, which were increased by the loss of several of his cattle by accidents and disease. To the buffetings of misfortune we could only oppose hard labor and the most rigid economy. My brother, at the age of thirteen, assisted in threshing the crop of corn, and at fifteen was the principal

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doctrines, as it is in Matt. xiii., from the 37 to 44 verse; and Rev. xx., from verse 11 to the end. If these Scriptures, seriously considered, can suffer any man to be easy, judge ye, and they will remain truth, whether believed or not. Whereas, on a mind regular, and having the animal part under subjection to the rational, in the very nature of the thing gives uniformity of pursuits. The desires, rectified by the Word of God, must give clearness of judgment, soundness of mind, regular affections, whence will flow peace of conscience, good hope, through grace, that all our interests are under the care of our Heavenly Father. This gives a relish to animal life itself, this joy that no man intermeddleth with, and which is peculiar to a Christian or holy life; and its comforts and blessings the whole Scripture is a comment upon, especially our Lord's sermon upon the Mount, Matt. v., 1—13, and its progress in the parable of the Sower in the thirteenth of Matthew.

Copies of existing letters penned by William Burness, father of the Poet.

To Mr. Thomas Oare, at Park, near Kirkoswald.

(*From fac-simile in "Manual," 1875.*)

Thomas,*—Wee propose to begin to shear wheat on monday come eight days, being 18 of September, and wee expect [you] here on Saturday, because wee will begin on monday morning. I am, yours, &c.,

William Burness.

Lochlea, 8 Sept. 1780.

To Mr. James Burness, Montrose.†

(*Douglas*, 1877.)

Dear Nephew,—I received your affectionate letter by the bearer, who came 5 miles with it to my house. I received [it] with the same warmth you wrott it, and I am extremely glad you express yourself with so warm regard for your parents and friends. I wish much Joy in your wife and child.‡ I should have been glad had you sent me their names, with the name of your brother-in-law.

I have a family of four sons and three douthers: two of my sons and two of my douthers are men and women, and all with me in the farmway: I have the happiness to hope they are virtuously inclined; my youngest douther is ten years

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* See the Poet's letter to this individual, at page 380.

† The holograph of this letter is in the Poet's monument at Edinburgh. The reader will observe the peculiar spelling of the word "daughter" which occurs five times in this letter: the first of these is exactly as in our print; but the four that follow bear marks of clumsy erasure, and a blotted attempt at correction into proper spelling. This would likely be done by Gilbert or one of his sisters in a revisal before despatching the document.

‡ The reference here is to the birth of James Burness, afterwards provost of Montrose—Born April 1st. 1780, Died February 15th. 1852. The correspondent addressed in the above letter was born in 1750 and died in 1837. His wife was Anne Greig, whom he married in 1777.

laborer on the farm, for we had no hired servant, male or female. The anguish of mind we felt at our tender years, under the straits and difficulties, was very great. I doubt not but the hard labor and sorrow of this period of his life was in a great measure the cause of that depression of spirits with which Robert was so often afflicted through his whole life afterwards."

The author's poetical productions of his juvenile years, from 1773 to 1777, will be found in this Volume, pp. 1 to 11.

Removal to Lochlea in Tarbolton Parish.

The lease of this farm extended from Whitsunday 1777 to Whitsunday 1784. "For four years we lived comfortably here," the poet writes, "but a lawsuit commencing," &c. Gilbert, in his narrative, thus remarks :—"These seven years were not marked by much literary improvement ; but during this time, the foundation was laid of certain habits in my brother's character which afterwards became but too prominent, and which malice and envy have taken delight to enlarge on. Though, when young, he was bashful and awkward in his intercourse with women, yet when he approached manhood, his attachment to their society became very strong, and he was constantly the victim of some fair enslaver. As these connections were governed by the strictest rules of virtue and modesty (from which he never deviated till he reached his 23rd year), he became anxious to be in a situation to marry. This was not likely to be the case while he remained a farmer, as the stocking of a farm required a sum of money he had no probability of being master of for a great while ; he began therefore to think of trying some other line of life."

The foregoing biographical notes bring the reader down to the year 1780, at which date the author's correspondence begins. Dr. Currie's first edition includes four letters addressed to "My dear E.," which we are now to present. They were not printed from the original, but from scroll copies found among the poet's manuscripts. We begin the correspondence with what appears to be the very earliest example extant of Burns's letter-writing. The holograph original is in the possession of John Adam, Esqr.,

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of age : my eldest son is named Robert ; the second Gilbert ; the third William ; the fourth John ; my eldest douther is named Agnes ; the second Anna Bela ; the third Isbal.

My Brother lives at Stewarton, by Kilmarnock ; he hath two sons and one douther, named John, William, and Fanny ; their circumstances are very indifferent.

I shall be happy to hear from you when it is convenient, when I shall writt to you from time to time. Please give my respects to your Brother and Sister in the kindest manner, and to your Wife, which will greatly oblige your affectionate Uncle,

Lochlea, 14 April 1781. William Burness.

Greenock, Scotland. It forms number one of the series of letters to E. B., of date 1780–81.

Lockhart makes the remark concerning these early love letters —"They are omitted in the 'General Correspondence' of Gilbert's edition, for what reason I know not, for they are surely as well worth preserving as many in the collection, particularly when their early date is considered. In such excellent English did Burns woo his country maidens in at most his twenty-second year." Robert Chambers says:—"The earliest specimens of Burns's prose composition which we possess are a series of letters to Ellison Begbie, most of them probably written in the winter of 1780–81—slightly pedantic in manner, as might be expected of a young genius still walking by the light of "A Vade-mecum of Epistolary Correspondence," and striving to educate his mind in a debating club, yet wonderful as emanating from a youth in such a situation, and as addressed to a rustic serving girl."

(1) TO ELLISON, OR ALISON BEGBIE. (?) *

(Douglass, 1877.)

What you may think of this letter, when you see the name that subscribes it, I cannot know; and perhaps I ought to make a long preface of apologies for the freedom I am going to take; but as my heart means no offence, but on the contrary is rather too warmly interested in your favor; for that reason, I hope you will forgive me when I tell you that I most sincerely and affectionately love you. I am a stranger in these matters, A——, as I assure you that you are the first woman to whom I ever made such a declaration; so I declare I am at a loss how to proceed.

I have more than once come into your company with a resolution to say what I have just now told you; but my resolution always failed me, and even now, my heart trembles for the consequence of what I have said. I hope my dear A—— you will not despise me because I am ignorant of the flattering arts of courtship: I hope my experience of the world will plead for me.

* See poems vol. 1, page 20 to 26.

I can only say I sincerely love you, and there is nothing on earth I so ardently wish for, or could possibly give me so much happiness, as one day to see you mine.

I think you cannot doubt my sincerity, as I am sure that whenever I see you, my very looks betray me: and when once you are convinced I am sincere, I am perfectly certain you have too much goodness and humanity to allow an honest man to languish in suspense, only because he loves you too well. And, I am certain that in such a state of anxiety, as I myself at present feel, an absolute denial would be a much preferable state.

(2) TO ELLISON, OR ALISON BEGBIE.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

[LOCHLEA, 1780.]

MY DEAR E.,—I do not remember, in the course of your acquaintance and mine, ever to have heard your opinion on the ordinary way of falling in love, amongst people of our station of life: I do not mean the persons who proceed in the way of bargain, but those whose affection is really placed on the person.

Though I be, as you know very well, but a very awkward lover myself, yet as I have some opportunities of observing the conduct of others who are much better skilled in the affair of courtship than I am, I often think it is owing to lucky chance more than to good management, that there are not more unhappy marriages than usually are.

It is natural for a young fellow to like the acquaintance of the females, and customary for him to keep their company when occasion serves: some one of them is more agreeable to him than the rest; there is something—he knows not what—pleases him—he

knows not how—in her company. This I take to be what is called *Love* with the greatest part of us, and I must own, my dear E., it is a hard game such a one as you have to play, when you meet with such a lover. You cannot admit but he is sincere, and yet, though you use him ever so favorably, perhaps in a few months, or at farthest a year or two, the same unaccountable fancy may make him as distractedly fond of another, whilst you are quite forgot. I am aware that perhaps the next time I have the pleasure of seeing you, you may bid me take my own lesson home, and tell me that the passion I have professed for you is perhaps one of those transient flashes I have been describing; but I hope, my dear E., you will do me the justice to believe me, when I assure you, that the love I have for you is founded on the sacred principles of Virtue and Honor; and by consequence, so long as you continue possessed of those amiable qualities which first inspired my passion for you, so long must I continue to love you. Believe me, my Dear, it is love like this alone which can render the married state happy. People may talk of flames and raptures as long as they please; and a warm fancy, with a flow of youthful spirits, may make them feel something like what they describe; but sure I am, the nobler faculties of the mind, with kindred feelings of the heart, can only be the foundation of friendship; and it has always been my opinion, that the married life is only *Friendship* in a more exalted degree.

If you will be so good as to grant my wishes, and it should please Providence to spare us to the latest periods of life, I can look forward and see, that even then, though bent down with wrinkled age; even then, when all other worldly circumstances will be indifferent to me, I will regard my E., with the tenderest affection; and for this plain reason, because she is still possessed of those noble qualities, improved to a

much higher degree, which first inspired my affection for her.

> "O happy state, when souls each other draw,
> Where love is liberty, and nature law."

I know, were I to speak in such a style to many a girl who thinks herself possessed of no small share of sense, she would think it ridiculous; but the language of the heart is—my dear E,—the only courtship I shall ever use to you.

When I look over what I have written, I am sensible it is vastly different from the ordinary style of courtship; but I shall make no apology. I know your good nature will excuse what your good sense may see amiss.

(3) TO ELLISON, OR ALISON BEGBIE.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

[LOCHLEA, 1780.]

I VERILY believe, my dear E., that the pure, genuine feelings of Love are as rare in the world as the pure, genuine principles of Virtue and Piety. This I hope will account for the uncommon style of all my letters to you. By uncommon, I mean, their being written in such a serious manner, which, to tell you the truth, has made me often afraid lest you should take me for some zealous bigot, who conversed with his mistress as he would converse with his minister. I don't know how it is, my Dear; for though, except your company, there is nothing on earth gives me so much pleasure as writing to you, yet it never gives me those giddy raptures so much talked of among lovers. I have often thought that if a well-grounded affection be not really a part of virtue, 'tis something extremely akin to it. Whenever the thought of my E. warms my heart, every feeling of humanity, every

principle of generosity, kindles in my breast. It extinguishes every dirty spark of malice and envy, which are but too apt to infest me. I grasp every creature in the arms of Universal Benevolence, and equally participate in the pleasures of the happy, and sympathize with the miseries of the unfortunate. I assure you, my Dear, I often look up to the Divine disposer of events, with an eye of gratitude for the blessing which I hope He intends to bestow on me, in bestowing you. I sincerely wish that He may bless my endeavors to make your life as comfortable and happy as possible, both in sweetening the rougher parts of my natural temper, and bettering the unkindly circumstances of my fortune. This, my Dear, is a passion, at least in my view, worthy of a man, and I will add, worthy of a Christian. The sordid earthworm may profess love to a woman's person, whilst in reality his affection is centered in her pocket; and the slavish drudge may go a-wooing as he goes to the horse-market, to choose one who is stout and firm, and as we may say of an old horse, one who will be a good drudge and draw kindly. I disdain their dirty, puny ideas. I would be heartily out of humor with myself, if I thought I were capable of having so poor a notion of the Sex which were designed to crown the pleasures of society. Poor devils! I don't envy them their happiness who have such notions. For my part, I propose quite other pleasures with my dear partner.

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(*) TO ELLISON, OR ALISON BEGBIE.

(Currie, 1800.)

[Lochlea, 1781.]

My Dear E.—I have often thought it a peculiarly unlucky circumstance in love, that though in every

other situation in life, telling the truth is not only the safest, but actually by far the easiest way of proceeding, a Lover is never under greater difficulty in acting, or more puzzled for expression, than when his passion is sincere, and his intentions are honorable. I do not think that it is very difficult for a person of ordinary capacity to talk of love and fondness, which are not felt, and to make vows of constancy and fidelity which are never intended to be performed, if he be villain enough to practice such detestable conduct: but to a man whose heart glows with the principles of integrity and truth, and who sincerely loves a woman of amiable person, uncommon refinement of sentiment, and purity of manners—to such a one, in such circumstances, I can assure you, my Dear, from my own feelings at this present moment, *Courtship* is a task indeed. There is such a number of foreboding fears, and distrustful anxieties crowd into my mind when I am in your company, or when I sit down to write to you, that what to speak or what to write I am altogether at a loss.

There is one rule which I have hitherto practised, and which I shall invariably keep with you, and that is, honestly to tell you the plain truth. There is something so mean and unmanly in the arts of dissimulation and falsehood, that I am surprised they can be used by any one in so noble, so generous a passion as Virtuous Love. No, my dear E., I shall never endeavor to gain your favor by such detestable practices. If you will be so good and so generous as to admit me for your partner, your companion, your bosom friend through life; there is nothing on this side of eternity shall give me greater transport; but I shall never think of purchasing your hand by any arts unworthy of a man, and I will add, of a Christian. There is one thing, my Dear, which I earnestly request of you, and it is this; that you would soon either

put an end to my hopes by a peremptory refusal, or cure me of my fears by a generous consent.

It would oblige me much if you would send me a line or two when convenient. I shall only add further, that if a behavior regulated (though perhaps but very imperfectly) by the rules of Honor and Virtue, if a heart devoted to love and esteem you, and an earnest endeavor to promote your happiness; if these are qualities you would wish in a friend, in a husband; I hope you shall ever find them in your real friend and sincere lover.

(5) TO ELLISON, OR ALISON BEGBIE.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

[LOCHLEA, 1781.]

I OUGHT in good manners to have acknowledged the receipt of your letter before this time, but my heart was so shocked with the contents of it, that I can scarcely yet collect my thoughts so as to write to you on the subject. I will not attempt to describe what I felt on receiving your letter. I read it over and over, again and again, and though it was in the politest language of refusal, still it was peremptory; 'you were very sorry you could not make me a return, but you wish me' what without you I never can obtain, 'you wish me all kind of happiness.' It would be weak and unmanly to say that without you I never can be happy; but sure I am, that sharing life with you, would have given it a relish, that, wanting you, I never can taste.

Your uncommon personal advantages, and your superior good sense, do not so much strike me; these possibly in a few instances may be met with in others; but that amiable goodness, that tender, feminine softness, that endearing sweetness of disposition, with all

the charming offspring of a warm feeling heart—these I never again expect to meet with in such a degree in this world. All these charming qualities, heightened by an education much beyond anything I have ever met with in any woman I ever dared to approach, have made an impression on my heart that I do not think the world can ever efface. My imagination had fondly flattered itself with a wish, I dare not say it ever reached a hope, that possibly I might one day call you mine. I had formed the most delightful images, and my fancy fondly brooded over them; but now I am wretched for the loss of what I really had no right to expect. I must now think no more of you as a mistress, still I presume to ask to be admitted as a friend. As such I wish to be allowed to wait on you, and as I expect to remove in a few days a little farther off, and you, I suppose, will perhaps soon leave this place, I wish to see you or hear from you soon; and if an expression should perhaps escape me rather too warm for friendship, I hope you will pardon it in, my dear Miss ——, (pardon me the dear expression for once).*

Brief Sojourn in Irvine, and return to Lochlea.

The last of the foregoing series of love letters closes with a reference to the fact that the writer expected soon to remove to some distance. Gilbert has explained that Robert and he had been allowed by their father to cultivate flax on their own account on a portion of the ground at Lochlea; and that in course of selling it Robert began to think of learning and pursuing the trade of a flax dresser, as

* We have already quoted Lockhart's and Chambers's opinions of the foregoing letters. Motherwell remarks, that "Burns in these letters moralizes occasionally very happily on love and marriage. They are in fact the only sensible love letters we have seen; yet they have an air of task-work and constraint about them that is far from natural."

Dr. Hately Waddell's opinion of them is thus briefly expressed:—"After such sermonising, the result was by no means wonderful."

well to suit his grand view of settling in life, as to turn the flax-growing on the farm to good account. On 11th November 1780, he was mainly instrumental in forming a Bachelor debating club in the village of Tarbolton, whose glory at length culminated in causing the production of the famous poem "Death and Dr. Hornbook." On the 4th of July 1781, he was admitted an apprentice freemason of St. David's Tarbolton Lodge, No. 174, and immediately thereafter he removed to the seaport town of Irvine, where he entered into partnership with a flax-dresser named Peacock, a distant relative of his mother's; but the result of that scheme was far from satisfactory. There, however, he formed an intimate friendship with a young seaman named Richard Brown, of whose talents and manliness of character he formed so high an opinion, that he seems to have adopted him as his model, both in sentiment and deportment. This young man became in course of time one of his most cherished correspondents; and it appears from one of Burns's letters to him (30th December 1787) that Brown was among the first individuals who discerned his latent genius, and encouraged him to aspire to the character of a poet.

The following letter addressed by him to his father completes the picture of that distress at Irvine; he was enabled to leave that town early in the spring of 1782, and return to his rustic occupation at Lochlea.

TO HIS FATHER.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

IRVINE, *Dec.* 27, 1781.

HONORED SIR,—I have purposely delayed writing, in the hope that I should have the pleasure of seeing you, on New-Year's day; but work comes so hard upon us, that I do not choose to be absent on that account, as well as for some other little reasons which I shall tell you at meeting. My health is nearly the same as when you were here, only my sleep is a little sounder, and on the whole I am rather better than otherwise, though I mend by very slow degrees. The weakness of my nerves has so debilitated my mind, that I dare neither review my past wants, nor look forward into futurity; for the least anxiety in my

breast produces most unhappy effects on my whole frame. Sometimes, indeed, when for an hour or two my spirits are a little lightened, I glimmer a little into futurity; but my principal, and indeed my only pleasurable, employment is looking backwards and forwards in a moral and religious way. I am quite transported at the thought that ere long, perhaps very soon, I shall bid an eternal adieu to all the pains, and uneasiness, and disquietudes of this weary life; for I assure you I am heartily tired of it; and if I do not very much deceive myself, I could contentedly and gladly resign it.

> "The soul, uneasy, and confined at home,
> Rests and expatiates in a life to come."

It is for this reason I am more pleased with the 15th, 16th, and 17th verses of the 7th chapter of Revelation,* than with any ten times as many verses in the whole Bible, and would not exchange the noble enthusiasm with which they inspire me for all that this world has to offer. As for this world, I despair of ever making a figure in it. I am not formed for the bustle of the busy, nor the flutter of the gay. I shall never again be capable of entering into such scenes. Indeed I am altogether unconcerned at the thoughts of this life. I foresee that poverty and obscurity probably await me, and I am in some measure prepared, and daily preparing, to meet them. I have but just time and paper to return you my grateful thanks for the lessons of virtue and piety you have given me, which were too much neglected at the time of giving them, but which, I hope have been remem-

* 'Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple; and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.'

bered ere it was too late. Present my dutiful respects to my mother, and my compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Muir; and, with wishing you a merry New-year's day I shall conclude. I am, honored Sir, your dutiful son, ROBERT BURNESS.

P. S.—My meal is nearly out; but I am going to borrow till I get more.*

THE PLOUGH AND THE LYRE RESUMED, 1782.

Speaking of this period in his Autobiography, the author says—"Rhyme, except some religious pieces that are in print, I had given up; but meeting with Fergusson's Scots Poems, I strung anew my wildly-sounding rustic lyre with emulating vigor." The admirable piece called "The death and dying words of poor Mailie," together with the songs, "My Nanie O," and "The Rigs o' Barley," are the striking compositions which the above remark suggests to the reader's mind; we gather from Gilbert's account of the production of *Poor Mailie* that their youngest brother John (born in 1769) was then alive. That youth was fourteen years old when he died, and consequently would be laid in Alloway kirkyard in 1783, just about a year before the patriarchal father was carried thither.

(1) TO SIR JOHN WHITEFOORD, BART. OF BALLOCHMYLE.

(DOUGLAS, 1877.)

SIR,—We who subscribe this are both members of St James's Lodge, Tarbolton, and one of us in the office of Warden, and as we have the honor of having

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*This beautifully dutiful and reverential letter goes far to justify what Waddell says of Burns's character even during the Irvine period. "Still (i. e. in spite of questionable fellowships, &c.,) his heart was uncontaminated, and his life, as lives then went, conspicuously pure. His studious habits, the gentleness and wisdom of his converse, his filial reverence and brotherly attachments were themes of admiration everywhere and to this day are spoken of." Read, in connection with this, his epitaph on his father, which carries its own evidence of its sincerity; and yet more, that portion of the Cotter's Saturday Night where he depicts the "patriarchal sire."—J. H.

you for Master of our Lodge, we hope you will excuse this freedom, as you are the proper person to whom we ought to apply. We look on our Mason Lodge to be a serious matter, both with respect to the character of Masonry itself, and likewise as it is a Charitable Society. This last, indeed, does not interest you farther than a benevolent heart is interested in the welfare of its fellow-creatures; but to us, Sir, who are of the lower orders of mankind, to have a fund in view, on which we may with certainty depend to be kept from want should we be in circumstances of distress, or old age, this is a matter of high importance.

We are sorry to observe that our Lodge's affairs with respect to its finances, have for a good while been in a wretched situation. We have considerable sums in bills which lye by without being paid, or put in execution, and many of our members never mind their yearly dues, or anything else belonging to the Lodge. And since the separation from St. David's, we are not sure even of our existence as a Lodge. There has been a dispute before the Grand Lodge, but how decided, or if decided at all, we know not.

For these and other reasons, we humbly beg the favor of you, as soon as convenient, to call a meeting, and let us consider on some means to retrieve our wretched affairs,—We are, &c.

The separation between the St. David's and St. James's Lodges of Tarbolton, above referred to, happened in June 1782; and therefore the latter portion of that year seems to be the date of the foregoing letter. It exists as a scroll in the poet's handwriting on the back of his draft of No. 1 of the love-letters to Ellison Begbie, given at p. 360, *supra*. The original is in the possession of John Adams, Esq., Greenock.

We have already noted that Burns was admitted an apprentice in St. David's Tarbolton Lodge (174) on 4th July, and passed and raised on 1st October 1781. At the disruption of that Lodge in June 1782, the separating body to which Burns

belonged obtained constitution as "St. James's Tarbolton Lodge (178)," and the poet's name occurs in the books of that Lodge as Depute-master, on 27th July 1784.

The next letter of the young bard is a very interesting one, addressed to his early preceptor, Murdoch. It not only exhibits the progress of his studies, but (as Motherwell has remarked) "affords us an insight into the origin of part of that sentimentalism and exaggeration of feeling which are occasionally perceptible, especially in his prose writings." The ballad "My father was a farmer upon the Carrick border," given at p. 38, Vol. 1, contains many of the characteristic thoughts found in this letter.

(1) TO MR. JOHN MURDOCH, SCHOOLMASTER,

STAPLES INN BUILDINGS, LONDON.

(CURRIE, 1800.)

LOCHLEA, 15*th January* 1783.

DEAR SIR,—As I have an opportunity of sending you a letter without putting you to that expense, which any production of mine would ill repay, I embrace it with pleasure, to tell you that I have not forgotten, nor will ever forget, the many obligations I lie under to your kindness and friendship.

I do not doubt, Sir, but you will wish to know what has been the result of all the pains of an indulgent father, and a masterly teacher; and I wish I could gratify your curiosity with such a recital as you would be pleased with; but that is what I am afraid will not be the case. I have indeed kept pretty clear of vicious habits, and in this respect, I hope my conduct will not disgrace the education I have gotten; but, as a man of the world, I am most miserably deficient. One would have thought that, bred as I have been under a father who has figured pretty well as *un homme des affaires*, I might have been what the world calls, a pushing active fellow; but to tell you

the truth, Sir, there is hardly anything more my reverse. I seem to be one sent into the world to see and observe; and I very easily compound with the knave who tricks me of my money, if there be any thing original about him which shews me human nature in a different light from any thing I have seen before. In short, the joy of my heart is to "study men, their manners, and their ways;" and for this darling subject I cheerfully sacrifice every other consideration. I am quite indolent about those great concerns that set the bustling, busy sons of care agog; and if I have to answer for the present hour I am very easy with regard to anything further. Even the last, worst shift of the unfortunate and the wretched,* does not much terrify me: I know that even then, my talent for what country folks call "a sensible crack," when once it is sanctified by a hoary head, would procure me so much esteem, that even then—I would learn to be happy. However, I am under no apprehensions about that, for though indolent, yet so far as an extremely delicate constitution permits, I am not lazy; and in many things, especially in tavern matters, I am a strict economist; not indeed for the sake of the money; but one of the principal parts in my composition is a kind of pride of stomach, and I scorn to fear the face of any man living; above everything, I abhor as hell, the idea of sneaking in a corner to avoid a dun—possibly some pitiful, sordid wretch who in my heart I despise and detest. 'Tis this, and this alone, that endears economy to me.† In the matter of books, indeed, I am very profuse. My favorite authors are of the sentimental kind, such as Shenstone, particularly his *Elegies;* Thomson; *Man of Feeling* (a book I prize

* The last shift alluded to here, must be the condition of an itinerant beggar. —CURRIE. The same sentiment, clothed in fascinating verse, is found in the first "Epistle to Davie."

† The reader will recognise in the above passage the materials of one of the most admired stanzas in the "Epistle to a young Friend."

next to the Bible); *Man of the World;* Sterne, especially his *Sentimental Journey;* M'Pherson's *Ossian*, &c.: these are the glorious models after which I endeavor to form my conduct; and 'tis incongruous, 'tis absurd to suppose that the man whose mind glows with sentiments lighted up at their sacred flame—the man whose heart distends with benevolence to the whole human race—he "who can soar above this little scene of things"—can he descend to mind the paltry concerns about which the terræfilial* race fret, and fume, and vex themselves! O how the glorious triumph swells my heart! I forget that I am a poor insignificant devil, unnoticed and unknown, stalking up and down fairs and markets, when I happen to be in them reading a page or two of Mankind, and "catching the manners living as they rise," whilst the men of business jostle me on every side as an idle incumbrance in their way.†—But I dare say I have by this time tired your patience; so I shall conclude with begging you to give Mrs. Murdoch—not my compliments, for that is a mere common place story; but my warmest, kindest wishes for her welfare; and accept of the same for yourself, from,—Dear Sir, yours, &c.

The reference made in the above letter to the writer's aged father is very slight, but elsewhere he says:—"the clouds of misfortune were gathering thick round my father's head, the darkest of which was, he was visibly far gone in a consumption." The two letters which follow—addressed to the son of James, the deceased elder brother of William Burness, carry that topic to its dark issue, and the first of these is expanded into what Chambers terms, "a sensible this-world-like sketch of the state of country matters at that time in Ayrshire."

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* Burns was fond of such Latin compounds as "terræfilial" and "tenebrific," the latter of which he uses in the *Epistle to Davie.*

† The reader will in this passage be reminded of similar language introduced into some of the poet's epistles in 1785, for instance,

> The warly race may drudge and drive,
> Hog-shouther jundie, stretch and strive,
> Let me lair Nature's face descrive," &c. p. 118.

In strict chronological order we ought here to introduce the opening passages of a very interesting Common-place Book, which the poet commenced in April 1783, and continued from time to time to insert entries therein till he closed it in October 1785, with the words—"Let my pupil, as he tenders his own peace, keep up a regular, warm intercourse with the Deity." But we will present that document *verbatim* and intact, from the original manuscript, in its proper place, and therefore defer its introduction until it may be perused with more effect.

(1) TO MR. JAMES BURNESS, WRITER, MONTROSE.*

(GILBERT BURNS'S ED., 1820.)

DEAR SIR,—My father received your favor of the 10th curt., and as he has been for some months very poorly in health, and is, in his own opinion—and indeed in almost every body's else—in a dying condition, he has only with great difficulty wrote a few farewell lines to each of his brothers-in-law. For this melancholy reason, I now hold the pen for him to thank you for your kind letter, and to assure you, Sir, that it shall not be my fault if my father's correspondence in the north die with him. My brother writes to John Caird, and to him I must refer you for the news of our family.†

I shall only trouble you with a few particulars relative to the present wretched state of this country. Our markets are exceedingly high—oatmeal 17*d.* and 18*d.* per peck, and not to be got even at that price. We have indeed been pretty well supplied with quantities of white peas from England and elsewhere, but that

* This gentleman, a son of James Burness, the deceased brother of William Burness, was, of course, a full cousin of the poet, and his senior by upwards of eight years.

† John Caird, as the reader has seen at p. 331 *supra*, was the husband of Elspet, a sister of the poet's father.

resource is likely to fail us, and what will become of us then, particularly the very poorest sort, Heaven only knows. This country, till of late, was flourishing incredibly in the manufacture of Silk, Lawn, and Carpet-weaving; and we are still carrying on a good deal in that way, but much reduced from what it was. We had also a fine trade in the Shoe way, but now entirely ruined, and hundreds driven to a starving condition on account of it. Farming is also at a very low ebb with us. Our lands, generally speaking, are mountainous and barren; and our Landholders, full of ideas of farming gathered from English, and the Lothians, and other rich soils in Scotland, make no allowance for the odds of the quality of land, and consequently stretch us much beyond what, in the event, we will be found able to pay. We are also much at a loss for want of proper methods in our improvements of farming. Necessity compels us to leave our old schemes, and few of us have opportunities of being well informed in new ones. In short, my dear Sir, since the unfortunate beginning of this American war, and its as unfortunate conclusion, this country has been, and still is, decaying very fast. Even in higher life, a couple of our Ayrshire noblemen, and the major part of our knights and squires, are all insolvent. A miserable job of a Douglas, Heron, and Co.'s bank, which no doubt you have heard of, has undone numbers of them; and imitating English and French, and other foreign luxuries and fopperies, has ruined as many more. There is a great trade of smuggling carried on along our coasts, which, however destructive to the interests of the kingdom at large, certainly enriches this corner of it, but too often at the expense of our morals. However, it enables individuals to make, at least for a time, a splendid appearance; but Fortune, as is usual with her when she is uncommonly lavish of her favors, is generally even with them at the last;

and happy were it for numbers of them if she would leave them no worse than when she found them.

My mother sends you a small present of a cheese; 'tis but a very little one, as our last year's stock is sold off; but if you could fix on any correspondent in Edinburgh or Glasgow, we would send you a proper one in the season. Mrs Black promises to take the cheese under her care so far, and then to send it to you by the Stirling carrier.

I shall conclude this long letter with assuring you that I shall be very happy to hear from you, or any of our friends in your country, when opportunity serves.

My father sends you, probably for the last time in this world, his warmest wishes for your welfare and happiness; and mother and the rest of the family desire to enclose their kind comp^nts^. to you, Mrs. Burness, and the rest of your family, along with, dear Sir,

Your affectionate Cousin,

ROBT. BURNESS.*

LOCHLEA, 21*st June* 1783.

(2) TO MR. JAMES BURNESS, WRITER, MONTROSE.

(GILBERT BURNS'S ED., 1820.)

D^R^. COUSIN,—I would have returned you my thanks for your kind favor of the 13th of December sooner, had it not been that I waited to give you an account of that melancholy event which for some time past we have from day to day expected.

On the 13th current I lost the best of fathers.† Though, to be sure, we have had long warning of the

* The original MS. of this letter, and of that which immediately follows, is preserved in the poet's monument at Edinburgh. A comparison of our text with that of other editions will show several nice variations here as the result of the collation.

† Notwithstanding the poet's (erroneous) impression in regard to his father's dislike to him, we see here, as elsewhere, the tender respect with which he cherished his memory.—J. H.

impending stroke; still the feelings of nature claim their part, and I cannot recollect the tender endearments and parental lessons of the best of friends and the ablest of instructors, without feeling what, perhaps, the calmer dictates of reason would partly condemn.

I hope my father's friends in your country will not let their connection in this place die with him. For my part I shall ever with pleasure—with pride, acknowledge my connection with those who were allied by the ties of blood and friendship to a man whose memory I shall ever honor and revere.

I expect therefore, my dear Sir, you will not neglect any opportunity of letting me hear from you, which will very much oblidge,—My dear Cousin, yours sincerely,

ROBERT BURNESS.

LOCHLEA, 17*th February* 1784.

(3) TO MR. JAMES BURNESS, WRITER, MONTROSE.

(CUNNINGHAM, 1834.)

MOSSGIEL, 3 *Aug.* 1784.

MY DEAR SIR,—I ought in gratitude to have acknowledged the receipt of your last kind letter before this time; but, without troubling you with any apology, I shall proceed to inform you that our family are all in good health at present, and we were very happy with the unexpected favor of John Caird's company for nearly two weeks, and I must say it of him that he is one of the most agreeable, facetious, warm-hearted lads I was ever acquainted with.

We have been surprised with one of the most extraordinary phenomena in the moral world, which, I dare say, has happened in the course of this last century. We have had a party of the "Presbytery Relief," as

they call themselves, for some time in this country. A pretty thriving society of them has been in the burgh of Irvine for some years past, till about two years ago, a Mrs. Buchan from Glasgow came and began to spread some fanatical notions of religion among them, and in a short time made many converts among them, and among others, their Preacher, one Mr. Whyte, who, upon that account, has been suspended and formally deposed by his brethren. He continued, however, to preach in private to his party, and was supported, both he and their Spiritual Mother, as they affect to call old Buchan, by the contributions of the rest, several of whom were in good circumstances; till in Spring last, the populace rose and mobbed the old leader, Buchan, and put her out of the town; on which all her followers voluntarily quitted the place likewise, and with such precipitation, that many of them never shut their doors behind them; one left a washing on the green, another a cow bellowing at the crib without meat, or any body to mind her, and after several stages they are fixed at present in the neighborhood of Dumfries. Their tenets are a strange jumble of enthusiastic jargon; among others, she pretends to give them the Holy Ghost by breathing on them, which she does with postures and practices that are scandalously indecent. They have likewise disposed of all their effects, and hold a community of goods, and live nearly an idle life, carrying on a great farce of pretended devotion in barns and woods, where they lodge and lie all together, and hold likewise a community of women, as it is another of their tenets that they can commit no moral sin. I am personally acquainted with most of them, and I can assure you the above mentioned are facts.

This, my dear Sir, is one of the many instances of the folly in leaving the guidance of sound reason and common sense in matters of religion. Whenever we

neglect or despise these sacred monitors, the whimsical notions of a perturbated brain are taken for the immediate influences of the Deity, and the wildest fanaticism, and the most inconsistent absurdities, will meet with abettors and converts. Nay, I have often thought, that the more out-of-the-way and ridiculous their fancies are, if once they are sanctified under the sacred name of Religion, the unhappy mistaken votaries are the more firmly glued to them.

I expect to hear from you soon, and I beg you will remember me to all friends, and believe me to be, my Dear Sir, your affectionate Cousin,

ROBERT BURNESS.

Direct to me at Mossgiel, parish of Mauchline, near Kilmarnock.

The holograph of the above letter is preserved in the poet's monument at Edinburgh, from which we supply the opening and concluding paragraphs hitherto omitted, and correct several inaccuracies in former editions.

The following letter is addressed to Thomas Orr, an old associate of the poet, in his Kirkoswald School days of Autumn 1775, who occasionally came to Lochlea to assist in shearing the harvest grain. Thomas Orr was in Burns's confidence regarding his amour with Peggy Thomson, which forms the subject of the following note. It is to him that William Burness addresses the first of the two letters of his here published. (See page 358.) See fac-simile of a letter to T. Orr, 1782, inserted.

(1) TO MR. THOMAS ORR,

PARK, NEAR KIRKOSWALD.

(DOUGLAS, 1877.)

DR. THOMAS,—I am much obliged to you for your last letter, tho' I assure you the contents of it gave me no manner of concern. I am presently so cursedly taken in with an affair of gallantry, that I am very

glad Peggy is off my hands, as I am at present embarrassed enough without her. I don't choose to enter into particulars in writing, but never was a poor rakish rascal in a more pitiful taking. I should be glad to see you to tell you the affair, meanwhile I am your friend,

ROBERT BURNESS.

MOSSGIEL, 11 *Nov.* 1784.

Amid all the wealth of poetry produced by Burns in course of the year 1785, it is curious to note that only one prose letter, known to have been penned by him in that year, is found in his correspondence. It is the one addressed to Miss Peggy Kennedy of Daljarrock, parish of Colmonell, a young Carrick beauty who in the autumn of that year paid a visit of some weeks' duration to her relative, Mrs. Gavin Hamilton. Burns became acquainted with her during his then almost daily intercourse with Mr. Hamilton, and recorded his admiration of her person in the poem printed at page 139, Vol. I. His warmest good-wishes were at same time expressed in the following letter which enclosed the verses.

(1) TO MISS MARGARET KENNEDY.*

(CROMEK, 1808.)

[AUTUMN of 1785.]

MADAM,—Permit me to present you with the enclosed song, as a small though grateful tribute for the honor of your acquaintance. I have in these verses attempted some faint sketches of your portrait in the unembellished, simple manner of descriptive TRUTH. Flattery, I leave to your LOVERS, whose exaggerating fancies may make them imagine you are still nearer perfection than you really are.

Poets, Madam, of all mankind, feel most forcibly

* Miss Kennedy was the niece of Sir Andrew Cathcart, of Carleton Bart. Burns made her acquaintance at the house of Gavin Hamilton, Mauchline. We will in a future portion of this work have to very fully treat of her history. She was the "occasion" of "Ye Banks and Braes o' Bonie Doon," and other pieces.—J. H.

the powers of BEAUTY; as, if they are really POETS of Nature's making, their feelings must be finer, and their taste more delicate than most of the world. In the cheerful bloom of SPRING, or the pensive mildness of AUTUMN, the grandeur of SUMMER, or the hoary majesty of WINTER, the poet feels a charm unknown to the most of his species: even the sight of a fine flower, or the company of a fine woman (by far the finest part of God's works below), have sensations for the poetic heart that the HERD of men are strangers to. On this last account, Madam, I am, as in many other things, indebted to Mr. Hamilton's kindness in introducing me to you. Your lovers may view you with a wish, I look on you with pleasure; their hearts, in your presence, may glow with desire, mine rises with admiration.

That the arrows of misfortune, however they should, as incident to humanity, glance a slight wound, may never reach your heart—that the snares of villainy may never beset you in the road of life—that INNOCENCE may hand you by the path of HONOR to the dwelling of PEACE—is the sincere wish of him who has the honor to be, &c. R. B.

The first letter that Burns penned in 1786 that has been preserved gives a hint to his correspondent that some important matter with respect to himself,—not the most agreeable—had occurred. It also gives a list of his more recent poetical compositions which not only furnishes an excellent guide in the chronology of those early poems, but evinces how eagerly the poet then was bent on creating materials to fill a volume of his works to be laid before the public.

(1) TO MR. JOHN RICHMOND, EDINBURGH.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

MOSSGIEL, *17th February* 1786.

MY DEAR SIR,—I have not time at present to upbraid you for your silence and neglect; I shall only

say I received yours with great pleasure. I have enclosed you a piece of rhyming ware for your perusal. I have been very busy with the Muses since I saw you, and have composed, among several others, "The Ordination," a poem on Mr. M'Kinlay's being called to Kilmarnock; "Scotch Drink," a poem; "The Cotter's Saturday Night;" an "Address to the Devil," &c. I have likewise completed my poem on the "Dogs," but have not shown it to the world. My chief patron now is Mr. Aiken, in Ayr, who is pleased to express great approbation of my works. Be so good as send me Fergusson,* by Connel, and I will remit you the money. I have no news to acquaint you with about Mauchline, they are just going on in the old way. I have some very important news with respect to myself, not the most agreeable—news I am sure you cannot guess, but I shall give you the particulars another time. I am extremely happy with Smith; † he is the only friend I have now in Mauchline. I can scarcely forgive your long neglect of me, and I beg you will let me hear from you regularly by Connel. If you would act your part as a friend, I am sure neither good nor bad fortune should estrange or alter me. Excuse haste, as I got yours but yesterday. I am, my dear Sir, yours,

ROBT. BURNESS.

(1) TO JAMES SMITH, MAUCHLINE.

(LOCKHART, 1828.)

. . . . Against two things I am fixed as fate—staying at home; and owning her conjugally. The first, by Heaven, I will not do!—the last, by Hell, I will never do! A good God bless you, and make you

* Robert Fergusson's Poems, which Burns had before perused in a borrowed copy.

† James Smith, an account of whom has been given at page 233 vol. I.

happy, up to the warmest weeping wish of parting friendship . . . .

If you see Jean, tell her I will meet her, so help me God, in my hour of need.* R. B.

Mr. Lockhart thus explains the above singular fragment :—"When Burns was first informed of Miss Armour's condition, the announcement staggered him like a blow. He saw nothing for it but to fly the country at once; and in a note to James Smith of Mauchline, the *confidante* of his amour, he wrote as above.

"The lovers met accordingly; and the result of the meeting was what was to be anticipated from the tenderness and the manliness of Burns's feelings. All dread of personal inconvenience yielded at once to the tears of the woman he loved, and ere they parted, he gave into her keeping a written acknowledgment of marriage, which, when produced by a person in Miss Armour's condition, is, according to the Scots law, to be accepted as legal evidence of an *irregular* marriage . . . . By what arguments the girl's parents afterwards prevailed on her to take so strange and so painful a step we know not; but the fact is certain, that, at their urgent entreaty, she destroyed the document, which must have been to her the most precious of her possessions—the only evidence of her marriage."

(1) TO MR. JOHN KENNEDY.†

(CUNNINGHAM, 1834.)

MOSSGIEL, 3*d March* 1786.

SIR,—I have done myself the pleasure of complying with your request in sending you my Cottager. If you have a leisure minute I should be glad you would copy it, and return me either the original or the transcript.

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* 'Tis a pity that the whole of this letter is not given.—G. G.

† This gentleman, an intimate friend of Gavin Hamilton, was then Factor at Dumfries House, and subsequently Factor to the Earl of Breadalbane. He died in 1812, aged 55; so that when he was entrusted with a perusal of the poet's only copy of the Cotter's Saturday Night, he was quite a young man, senior of Burns by only two years.

as I have not a copy of it by me, and I have a friend who wishes to see it,

> Now Kennedy, if foot or horse
> E'er bring you in by Mauchline Corse, &c.
>
> *See* p. 256, *supra*.

ROBT. BURNESS.

(1) TO MR. ROBERT MUIR, KILMARNOCK.*

(CUNNINGHAM, 1834.)

MOSSGIEL, *20th March*, 1786.

DEAR SIR,—I am heartily sorry I had not the pleasure of seeing you as you returned through Mauchline; but as I was engaged, I could not be in town before the evening.

I here enclose you my "Scotch Drink," and "may the —— follow with a blessing for your edification." I hope, some time before we hear the gowk, to have the pleasure of seeing you in Kilmarnock, when I intend to have a gill between us in a mutchkin-stoup, which will be a great comfort and consolation to, Dear Sir, your humble Servant,

ROBT. BURNESS.

(1) TO ROBERT AIKEN, ESQ., AYR.

(CUNNINGHAM, 1834.)

MOSSGIEL, *3d April* 1786.

DEAR SIR,—I received your kind letter with double pleasure, on account of the *second* flattering instance

* This gentleman's name is inserted as a subscriber for forty copies of the first Edinburgh edition of our poet's works. He was a wine-merchant of Kilmarnock, and owner of a small estate there, called Loanfoot, which however was burdened with bonds. He died on 22d April 1788, just six days after the registration of the deed which discharged the property from its debt. Being a bachelor, his only sister, Agnes Muir or Smith, wife of Wm. Smith, merchant, Kilmarnock, succeeded to Loanfoot. It was afterwards sold to the Duchess of Portland.

of Mrs. C.'s notice and approbation. I assure you, I

'Turn out the *brunt* side o' my shin,' brent or brand

as the famous Ramsay, of jingling memory, says, of such a patroness. Present her my most grateful acknowledgments, in your very best manner of telling truth. I have inscribed the following stanza on the blank-leaf of Miss More's works :—

Thou flattering mark of friendship kind.
See p. 261, *supra*.

My proposals for publishing I am just going to send to the press. I expect to hear from you by the first opportunity. I am ever, Dear Sir, yours,

ROBT. BURNESS.

Mr Robert Aiken, writer in Ayr, was the procurator who so ably defended Mr Gavin Hamilton before the Presbytery in the persecuting proceedings against him at instance of the Rev. Wm. Auld and "Holy Willie." (*See* p. 91, *supra*.)

The next letter in order of date is a very important one, as marking a painful crisis in the story of the poet's intercourse with Jean Armour. It was first published by Cunningham, who has noted that the address is wanting on the original letter, and that from internal evidence only it is supposed to have been written to

(1) JOHN BALLANTINE, ESQ., BANKER, AYR.

(CUNNINGHAM, 1834.)

[About 14*th April* 1786.]

HONORED SIR,—My proposals came to hand last night, and knowing that you would wish to have it in your power to do me a service as early as any body, I enclose you half a sheet of them. I must consult you, first opportunity, on the propriety of sending my *quondam* friend, Mr. Aiken, a copy. If he is now re-

conciled to my character as an honest man, I would do it with all my soul; but I would not be beholden to the noblest being ever God created, if he imagined me to be a rascal. *Apropos*, old Mr. Armour prevailed with him to mutilate that unlucky paper yesterday. Would you believe it? though I had not a hope, nor even a wish to make her mine after her conduct; yet when he told me the names were cut out of the paper, my heart died within me, and he cut my veins with the news.* Perdition seize her falsehood!

ROBT. BURNS.

One copy of the poet's printed "proposals for publishing," referred to in the foregoing letter, is known to have been preserved. In 1871, J. B. Greenshields, Esq., of Kerse, Lesmahagow, notified in a Glasgow newspaper that he was the fortunate possessor of that unique relic, a copy of which we here annex. Appended to it, in MS. are the signatures of sixteen subscribers, of what district does not appear. The fifteenth name—that of "Wm. Lorrimer"—is scored through, and the following remark attached "Copy sent per Charles Crichton—the blockhead refused it."

April 14th, 1786.

PROPOSALS FOR PUBLISHING BY SUBSCRIPTION,

SCOTTISH POEMS BY ROBERT BURNS.

The work to be elegantly printed, in one volume octavo. Price, stitched, Three Shillings. As the Author has not the most distant mercenary view in publishing, as soon as so many Subscribers appear as will defray the necessary expense, the work will be sent to the press.

"Set out the *brunt*† side of your shin, brent
For pride in poets is nae sin:
Glory's the prize for which they rin,
And Fame's their joe;
And wha blows best his horn shall win,
And wherefore no?"

Allan Ramsay.

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* Mr. Aiken acted as legal agent for Mr. Armour, in the matter between him and the poet.—J. H.

† Brunt (as well as its forms *brent* and *brant*) is from the same root as German *brennan*, to burn, and means primarily *burnished* like newly-minted coin. *Brant* new or *brent* new (English *brand* new) is a common expression for quite new. *Brunt* as used here has its secondary meaning of best-looking.—J. H.

We undersubscribers engage to take the above-mentioned work, on the conditions specified.

(*Here follow Subscriber's names in manuscript.*)

William Murray, one copy,
R. Thomson, 1 copy,
James Hall, one copy,
Gavin Stewart, one copy,
John Hasting, one copy,
William Johnston, 3 coppies,
James Ingles, one copy,
John Boswell, one coppie,
Gavin Geddes, two coppies,
Geo. Howitson, one copy,
Colin M'Dougall, one coppy,
Charles Howitson, one copy
William M'Call, one copy,
(Sent per Mr. Dun.)
William Templeton, one coppy,
William Lorrimer, (copy sent per Charles Crichton—the blockhead refused it),
John Merry, two coppies.

(1) TO MR. M'WHINNIE, WRITER, AYR.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

[MOSSGIEL, 17*th April* 1786.]

It is injuring *some* hearts, those that elegantly bear the impression of the good Creator, to say to them you give them the trouble of obliging a friend; for this reason, I only tell you that I gratify my own feelings in requesting your friendly offices with respect to the enclosed, because I know it will gratify *yours* to assist me in it to the utmost of your power.

I have sent you four copies, as I have no less than eight dozen, which is a great deal more than I shall ever need.

Be sure to remember a poor poet militant in your prayers. He looks forward with fear and trembling to that, to him, important moment which stamps the *die* with—with—with, perhaps the eternal disgrace of, my dear Sir, your humble, afflicted, tormented,

ROBT. BURNS.

(2) TO MR. JOHN KENNEDY.

(CUNNINGHAM, 1834.)

[MOSSGIEL, *20th April* 1786.]

SIR,—By some neglect in Mr. Hamilton, I did not hear of your kind request for a subscription paper till this day. I will not attempt any acknowledgement for this, nor the manner in which I see your name in Mr Hamilton's Subscription-list. Allow me only to say, Sir, I feel the weight of the debt.

I have here likewise enclosed a small piece, the very latest of my productions. I am a good deal pleased with some sentiments myself, as they are just the native querulous feelings of a heart which, as the elegantly melting Gray says "melancholy has marked for her own."

Our race comes on apace—that much expected scene of revelry and mirth; but to me it brings no joy equal to that meeting with you with which you last flattered the expectation of, Sir, your indebted Servant,

ROBT. BURNS.

Enclosed in this letter was the author's poem—"To a Mountain Daisy. On turning one down with the plough in April 1786;" but here inscribed under the title, "THE GOWAN."

"Wee, modest, crimson-tipped flower,
Thou's met me in an evil hour," &c., see page 275 *supra*.

On the subject of the breach between the poet and his privately espoused 'Bonie Jean,' with its effects upon his mind and sentiments, the reader is referred to the series of poetical pieces in this Volume from p. 273 to p. 290. In the following letter to Mr. John Arnot, which we here present, Burns treats the whole matter in a surprisingly frolicsome humor, approaching even to the burlesque.

(1) TO JOHN ARNOT OF DALQUATSWOOD, ESQ.,

INCLOSING A SUBSCRIPTION-BILL FOR MY FIRST EDITION, WHICH WAS PRINTED AT KILMARNOCK.

(DOUGLAS, 1877.)

[*April* 1786.]

SIR,—I have long wished for some kind of claim to the honor of your acquaintance, and since it is out of my power to make that claim by the least service of mine to you, I shall do it by asking a friendly office of you to me.—I should be much hurt, Sir, if any one should view my poor Parnassian Pegasus in the light of a spur-galled Hack, and think that I wish to make a shilling or two by him. I spurn the thought.—

> It may do—maun do, Sir, wi' them wha
> Maun please the great folk for a wame-fou;
> For me, sae laigh I need na bow,
> For, Lord be thankit! I can plough:
> And when I downa yoke a naig,
> Then, Lord be thankit! I can beg.—

You will then, I hope Sir, forgive my troubling you with the inclosed, and spare a poor heart-crushed devil a world of apologies—a business he is very unfit for at any time; but at present, widowed as he is of every woman-giving comfort, he is utterly incapable of. Sad and grievous of late, Sir, has been my tribulation, and many and piercing my sorrows; and had it not been for the loss the world would have sustained in losing so great a poet, I had, ere now, done as a much wiser man, the famous Achitophel of long-headed memory did before me, when "he went home and set his house in order." I have lost, Sir, that dearest earthly treasure, that greatest blessing here below, that

last, best gift which completed Adam's happiness in the garden of bliss, I have lost—I have lost—my trembling hand refuses its office, the frighted ink recoils up the quill—Tell it not in Gath—I have lost—a—a—a wife!

> Fairest of God's creation, last and best!
> *Now art thou lost.*

You have doubtless, Sir, heard my story, heard it with all its exaggerations; but as my actions, and my motives for action, are peculiarly like myself, and that is peculiarly like nobody else, I shall just beg a leisure-moment and a spare tear of you, until I tell my own story my own way.

I have been all my life, Sir, one of the rueful-looking, long-visaged sons of Disappointment.—A damned star has always kept my zenith, and shed its baleful influence, in that emphatic curse of the Prophet—"And behold whatsoever he doth, it shall not prosper!" I rarely hit where I aim: and if I want anything, I am almost sure never to find it where I seek it. For instance, if my penknife is needed, I pull out twenty things—a plough-wedge, a horse nail, an old letter, or a tattered rhyme, in short everything but my penknife; and that, at last, after a painful, fruitless search, will be found in the unsuspected corner of an unsuspected pocket, as if on purpose thrust out of the way. Still, Sir, I had long had a wishing eye to that inestimable blessing, a wife. My mouth watered deliciously, to see a young fellow, after a few idle, common-place stories from a gentleman in black, strip and go to bed with a young girl, and no one durst say black was his eye; while I, for just doing the same thing, only wanting that ceremony, am made a Sunday's laughing stock, and abused like a pick-pocket. I was well aware though, that if my ill-starred fortune

got the least hint of my connubial wish, my schemes would go to nothing. To prevent this, I determined to take my measures with such thought and forethought, such a caution and precaution, that all the malignant planets in the Hemisphere should be unable to blight my designs. Not content with, to use the words of the celebrated Westminster Divines, "The outward and ordinary means" I left no stone unturned, sounded every unfathomed depth; stopped up every hole and bore of an objection; but, how shall I tell it! notwithstanding all this turning of stones, stopping of bores, etc.—whilst I, with secret pleasure, marked my project swelling to the proper crisis, and was singing *Te Deum* in my own fancy; or, to change the metaphor, whilst I was vigorously pressing on the siege; had carried the counter-scarp, and made a practicable breach behind the curtain in the gorge of the very principal bastion; nay, having mastered the covered way, I had found means to slip a choice detachment into the very citadel; while I had nothing less in view than displaying my victorious banners on the top of the walls—Heaven and Earth must I "remember"! my damned star wheeled about to the zenith, by whose baleful rays Fortune took the alarm, and pouring in her forces on all quarters, front, flank, and rear, I was utterly routed, my baggage lost, my military chest in the hands of the enemy; and your poor devil of a humble servant, commander-in-chief forsooth, was obliged to scamper away, without either arms or honors of war, except his bare bayonet and cartridge-pouch; nor in all probability had he escaped even with them, had he not made a shift to hide them under the lap of his military cloak.

In short, Pharaoh at the Red Sea, Darius at Arbela, Pompey at Pharsalia, Edward at Bannockburn, Charles at Pultaway, Burgoyne at Saratoga—no Prince, Potentate, or Commander of ancient or modern unfortunate

memory ever got a more shameful or more total defeat—

"O horrible! O horrible! most horrible!"

How I bore this, can only be conceived. All powers of recital labor far, far behind. There is a pretty large portion of bedlam in the composition of a poet at any time; but on this occasion I was nine parts and nine tenths, out of ten, stark staring mad. At first, I was fixed in stuporific insensibility, silent, sullen, staring like Lot's wife besaltified in the plains of Gomorha. But my second paroxysm chiefly beggars description. The rifted northern ocean when returning suns dissolve the chains of winter, and loosening precipices of long accumulated ice tempest with hideous crash the foaming Deep—images like these may give some faint shadow of what was the situation of my bosom. My chained faculties broke loose, my maddening passions, roused to tenfold fury, bore over their banks with impetuous, resistless force, carrying every check and principle before them. Counsel, was an unheeded call to the passing hurricane; Reason, a screaming elk in the vortex of Moskoestrom; and Religion, a feebly-struggling beaver down the roarings of Niagara. I reprobated the first moment of my existence; execrated Adam's folly-infatuated wish for that goodly-looking, but poison-breathing gift, which had ruined him, and undone me; and called on the womb of uncreated night to close over me and all my sorrows.

A storm naturally overblows itself. My spent passions gradually sank into a lurid calm; and by degrees I have subsided into the time-settled sorrow of the sable widower, who, wiping away the decent tear, lifts up his grief-worn eye to look—for another wife.—

"Such is the state of man; to-day he buds
His tender leaves of hope; to-morrow blossoms,
And bears his blushing honors thick upon him;
The third day comes a frost, a killing frost,
And nips his root, and then he falls as I do."

Such, Sir, has been this fatal era of my life.—"And it came to pass, that when I looked for sweet, behold bitter; and for light, behold darkness."

But this is not all.—Already the holy beagles, the houghmagandie pack, begin to snuff the scent, and I expect every moment to see them cast off, and hear them after me in full cry; but as I am an old fox, I shall give them dodging and doubling for it, and by and by, I intend to earth among the mountains of Jamaica.

I am so struck, on a review, with the impertinent length of this letter, that I shall not increase it with one single word of apology; but abruptly conclude with assuring you that I am, Sir, Your and Misery's most humble servant,

ROB^T. BURNS.

The name of the gentleman to whom the foregoing strange epistle is addressed is found in the list of subscribers to the author's edition, Edinburgh 1787. That Burns himself thought well of this voluminous letter is certain from the circumstance that he preserved a copy of it, and several years afterwards was at the pains to transcribe it into the book of his letters collected by him for his friend, Mr. Riddell of Friar's Carse. In that collection it is placed No. 2 in the list, and headed by the following introductory note:—

This was addressed to one of the most accomplished of the sons of men that I ever met with—John Arnot of Dalquhatswood in Ayrshire. Alas! had he been equally prudent! It is a damning circumstance in human life that prudence, insular and alone, without another virtue, will conduct a man to the most envied eminence in life, while, having every other quality, and wanting that one, which at best is itself but a half virtue, will not save a man from the world's contempt, and real misery—perhaps perdition.

The story of the letter was this. I had got deeply in love with a young fair one, of which proofs were

every day arising more and more to view. I would gladly have covered my *Inamorata* from the darts of calumny with the conjugal shield—nay, I had actually made up some sort of Wedlock; but I was at that time deep in the guilt of being unfortunate, for which good and lawful objection, the lady's friends broke all our measures and drove me *au desespoir.*

EGOTISMS FROM MY OWN SENSATIONS.

(CROMEK, 1808.)

May, ——

I don't well know what is the reason of it, but somehow or other though I am, when I have a mind, pretty generally beloved; yet I never could get the art of commanding respect. I imagine it is owing to my being deficient in what Sterne calls "that under-strapping virtue of discretion." I am so apt to a *lapsus linguæ*, that I sometimes think the character of a certain great man I have read of somewhere is very much *apropos* to myself, that he was "a compound of great talents and great folly."

N.B.—To try if I can discover the causes of this wretched infirmity, and, if possible, to mend it.

The preceding remarks are followed by these pieces:—

1. Song—"Tho' cruel Fate should bid us part,"
2. Fragment—"One night as I did wander,"
3. Song—"There was a lad was born in Kyle,"
4. Elegy on the Death of Robert Ruisseaux,

Pp. 123 *to* 128, *supra*

(3) TO MR. JOHN KENNEDY,

ENCLOSING THE AUTHOR'S "EPISTLE TO JOHN RANKINE," P. 65, SUPRA.

(CUNNINGHAM, 1834.)

MOSSGIEL, *17th May* 1786.

DEAR SIR,—I have sent you the above hasty copy as I promised. In about three or four weeks I shall probably set the press a-going. I am much hurried at present, otherwise your diligence, so very friendly in my Subscription, should have a more lengthened acknowledgment from, Dear Sir, your obliged Servant, ROBT. BURNS.

(1) TO MR. DAVID BRICE, SHOEMAKER, GLASGOW.

(CROMEK, 1808,* and CUNNINGHAM, 1834.)

MOSSGIEL, *12th June* 1786.

DEAR BRICE,—I received your message by G. Paterson, and as I am very throng at present, I just write to let you know that there is such a worthless, rhyming reprobate as your humble servant still in the land of the living, though I can scarcely say in the place of hope. I have no news to tell you that will give me any pleasure to mention, or you to hear.

Poor ill-advised, ungrateful Armour came home on Friday last. You have heard all the particulars of that affair, and a black affair it is. What she thinks of her conduct now, I don't know; one thing I do

* Cromek gave a mere fragment of this letter, which Cunningham afterwards published more completely.

know—she has made me completely miserable. Never man loved, or rather adored, a woman more than I did her; and, to confess a truth between you and me, I do still love her to distraction after all, though I won't tell her so if I were to see her, which I don't want to do. My poor dear unfortunate Jean! how happy have I been in thy arms! It is not the losing her that makes me so unhappy, but for her sake I feel most severely: I foresee she is in the road to—I am afraid—eternal ruin.

May Almighty God forgive her ingratitude and perjury to me, as I from my very soul forgive her: and may His grace be with her, and bless her in all her future life! I can have no nearer idea of the place of eternal punishment than what I have felt in my own breast on her account. I have tried often to forget her: I have run into all kinds of dissipation and riots, mason-meetings, drinking-matches, and other mischief, to drive her out of my head, but all in vain. And now for a grand cure: the ship is on her way home that is to take me out to Jamaica; and then, farewell dear old Scotland! and farewell dear, ungrateful Jean! for never, never will I see you more.

You will have heard that I am going to commence *Poet* in print; and to-morrow my works go to the press. I expect it will be a volume of about two hundred pages—it is just the last foolish action I intend to do; and then turn a wise man as *fast as possible.* Believe me to be, dear Brice, your friend and well-wisher, ROBT. BURNS.

(4) TO MR. JAMES BURNESS, WRITER, MONTROSE.

(DOUGLAS, 1877.)

MY DEAR SIR,—I wrote you about three half-twelve months ago by post, and I wrote you about a year

ago by a private hand, and I have not had the least return from you. I have just half-a-minute to write you by an Aberdeen gentleman of my acquaintance who promises to wait upon you with this on his arrival, or soon after: I intend to send you a letter accompanied with a singular curiosity in about five or six weeks hence. I shall then write you more at large; meanwhile you are just to look on this as a *memento me.* I hope all friends are well.—I am ever, my dear Sir, your affectionate cousin,

ROBT. BURNESS.

MOSSGIEL, near MAUCHLINE,
July 5th, 1786.

The poet's holograph of this note is in his monument at Edinburgh. The "singular curiosity" here referred to means a copy of the first edition of the author's poems, then at the press. The reader will notice that although Burns had, some three months previously, ceased to write his name, as in two syllables, he here returns to the old mode of spelling, in deference to his correspondent.

(2) TO MR. JOHN RICHMOND, EDINBURGH.

(HOGG AND MOTHERWELL, 1835.)

MOSSGIEL, *9th July* 1786.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—With the sincerest grief I read your letter. You are truly a son of misfortune. I shall be extremely anxious to hear from you how your health goes on; if it is any way re-establishing, or if Leith promises well: in short, how you feel in the inner man.

No news worth anything; only godly Bryan was in the *Inquisition* yesterday, and half the countryside as witnesses against him. He still stands out steady and denying; but proof was led yesternight of circumstances highly suspicious, almost *de facto:* one of the

girls made oath that she upon a time rashly entered the house (to speak in your cant) "in the hour of cause." *

I have waited on Armour since her return home; not from the least view of reconciliation, but merely to ask for her health, and to you I will confess it, from a foolish hankering fondness, very ill placed indeed. The mother forbade me the house, nor did Jean show that penitence that might have been expected. However the priest, I am informed, will give me a certificate as a single man, if I comply with the rules of the church, which for that very reason I intend to do.

I am going to put on sackcloth and ashes this day. I am indulged so far as to appear in my own seat. *Peccavi, pater, miserere mei.* My book will be ready in a fortnight. If you have any subscribers, return them by Connell. The Lord stand with the righteous; amen, amen. R. B.

NOTE:—We had determined, when we treated of the "Court of Equity" at page 156 *supra*, to have entirely left out the "minutes" which exist in Burns's own handwriting in the British Museum, Egerton MSS. 1656, folio 8. We have, however, now determined to present it to the public in such a form as will not be offensive in family circles. We may say for those who are curious in such matters that the whole performance (and especially the parts left out) is simply silly, and altogether unworthy the genius of Burns; but as it is frequently referred to in this edition of his works, we think that the abridgement which we here give will be satisfactory. It has never before appeared in print in any form, and as it is the only authenticated production of Burns which would have been left out had we omitted it, we think this

* This paragraph Dr. Chambers has fastidiously omitted. The "Inquisition" here alluded to was probably the "Court of Equity" held within the house of John Dow, vintner, some account of which is given at p. 156, *supra*. John Richmond had formerly acted as "Clerk of Court," and hence the reason of "godly Bryan's" delinquency being communicated to him.

an additional reason for giving it place in our COMPLETE EDITION of his works.—J. H.

THE COURT OF EQUITY.

In Truth and Honor's name, Amen
Know all men by these presents plain.

This twalt o' May, at Mauchline given;
The year 'tween eighty-five an' seven;
We . . . . . .
As per extractum from each Session;
And by our Brethren constituted,
A Court of Equity deputed,
With special authoris'd direction,
To take beneath our strict protection,
* . . . . . .
We take cognisance there anent,
The proper Judges competent.
First, Poet Burns, he takes the Chair:
Allow'd by all, his title's fair;
And past nem. con. without dissension,
He has a duplicate pretension.
The second Smith, our worthy Fiscal,
To cowe each pertinacious rascal;
In this, as ev'ry other state,
His merit is conspicuous great.
Richmond the third, our trusty Clerk,
Our Minutes regular to mark;
And sit dispenser of the law
In absence of the former twa.
The fourth, our Messenger at arms,
When failing all the milder terms,
Hunter a hearty willing Brother,
Weel skill'd in dead an' living leather.

Without Preamble less or more said,
We body politic aforesaid,
With legal, due whereas, and wherefore,
We are appointed here to care for
The int'rests of our Constituents,
And punish contraveening truants;
† . . . . . .

* Eight lines omitted here referring to village gossip and scandal.
† Two lines omitted.

Whereas, Our Fiscal by Petition
Informs us there is strong suspicion
You, Coachman Dow, and Clockie Brown
Baith residenters in this town,
In other words, You, Jock and Sandie
* . . . . . .
Then Brother Dow, if you're asham'd
In such a quorum to be named,
Your conduct much is to be blam'd;
See ev'n himsel, there's godly Bryan,
The auld whatreck he has been tryin',
When such as he put to their han',
What man on character need stan'?
Then Brother dear lift up your brow,
And like yoursel, the truth avow;
Erect a dauntless face upon it,
An' say, "I am the man has done it;
† . . . . . .
Then Brown and Dow above-design'd,
For clags ‡ an' clauses there subjoin'd,
We, Court aforesaid, cite & summon,
That on the fourth o' June incomin,
The hour o' Cause, in our Court-ha'
At Whiteford's Arms, Ye answer Law.

But, as reluctantly we punish,
An' rather, mildly would admonish;
Since Better Punishment prevented,
Than Obstinacy fair repented——

Then, for that ancient Secret's sake,
You have the honor to partake;
An' for that noble Badge you wear,
You, Sandie Dow our Brother dear,
We give you as a Man an' Mason,
This private, sober, friendly lesson.
§ . . . . . .
The rope they round the pump shall tak
An' tye your hans behint your back;

* Twenty-five lines omitted, describing the charge against Brown, the clock-maker.
† Thirty-one lines omitted, containing charge against Coachman Dow.
‡ Impeachments, a Scotch legal term.
§ Two lines omitted.

Wi' just an ell o' string allow'd,
To jink an' hide you frae th' crowd.
There he shall stan', a legal seisure,
During said Maggie Mitchel's pleasure;
So be, her pleasure dinna pass
Seven turnings of a half-hour glass;
Nor shall it in her pleasure be
To lowse you out in less than three.

This, our futurum esse Decreet,
We mean it not to keep a secret:
But in Our summons here insert it,
And whoso dares, may controvert it,

This, mark'd before the date and place is:
Subsign: um est per Burns the Preses.
L. S. B.

This Summons & the Signet mark
Extractum est per Richmond, Clerk.
Richmond.

At Mauchline, twenty-fifth of May,
About the twalt hour o' the day,
You two, in propria persona,
Before design'd Sandie & Johnie,
This summons legally have got,
As vide Witness underwrote;
Within the house of John Dow, Vinter
Nunc facio hoc—
Gullelmus Hunter.

END OF VOLUME I.

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